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COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

*The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND.*

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## DISCIPLES OF FREEDOM

BLAIR BOLLES

TODAY we mean so much to Europe we may forget what Europe means to us. Europe has always been a necessary staff for the United States. Even if there was a time when we were isolated from Europe economically, geographically, and militarily, we never have been isolated from the idea. Europe has provided us with the foundation upon which we built our unequaled political structure, and Europe again and again by fervent expressions of admiration for our ways has fed and renewed our confidence in ourselves. Only this winter we came into a much fuller, more exciting, sense of our power when Winston Churchill addressed us from our Capitol.

The best of European political thought has been often more readily applicable in America than in Europe; our practice is the child of that best thought. It has been brought us by books and by men from France, England, Switzerland, from northern, southern, and eastern Europe. It has come also, we know, from Germany. German stay-at-homes too often produce, and then follow, the wrong and savage leader, but German emigres have preached and practiced here a dignity, honesty, justice, and acceptance of others, with a facility and fervor that tend to establish these qualities as directors of po-

litical conduct. The two great German names in American politics are Carl Schurz and Francis Lieber. Lieber bequeathed us a motto as a guide to life that should be shouted from the sky at the oppressed in Germany today:

"My country is dear; liberty is dearer; truth is dearest."

It is good for the American spirit, lest it grow smug, to recall now what we have gained from the lands whose deliverance is our present task.

From the primary school forward, we know we are indebted to a Frenchman for the whole frame of our Federal Governmental structure, the curious division of the central government into three balanced parts, the legislative, executive, and judiciary, each empowered to restrain the others. Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, accustomed to the absolute authority of the 18th-century Louis Bourbons, mistakenly thought he saw this division in England, and applauded it in his great work, *L'Esprit des Lois*. But what Montesquieu imagined to exist in England was made, through the Constitution, to exist in America. It exists to this moment, condemned sometimes as a moat to progress but glorified also as the effective opponent of tyranny.

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Men from the downtrodden France of 1942 who have made their secret and difficult way to Washington say that what small hope their coerced compatriots keep rests on faith in the United States. They are bitter with us because we do not manage to inflame that smoldering faith. The State Department gives assurances, almost, that our Government rejects such faith. Their bitterness comes from impatience and from mistaking the pronouncements of the State Department for the voice of the people. This division between diplomacy and democracy is one of the blemishes that spot our system. It would be impossible for us—a people so devoted to the principle of liberty as we—to leave in bondage, to their enemies at home or abroad, a people like the French. What though they gave the world those monsters Darlan and Laval and the rest? They gave us also a literature for freedom, which here we praise; for equalitarianism, which here we practice; and for virtue in government, which here we constantly hope for. Laval and Darlan move on toward their graves, but French literature lives and guides us until our last descendants die. The France that once gave us the Revolution can be reclaimed from the France that now is smothered by Berlin and Vichy.

### II

What we have received from abroad can best be emphasized in terms of a few men and their work. "Thomas Jefferson did more than any other man of his generation to formulate the creed of Americanism," writes Gilbert Chinard in *Thomas Jefferson, the Apostle of Americanism*; and Thomas Jefferson as President supported the introduction of a wholly-European mind into the conduct of American affairs.

The mind belonged to Albert Gallatin, a Swiss, who came from Geneva. That

city's intellectual climate favored the independent thought of Rousseau, but it favored equally the conservative thought of the political party known as the Négatif, which held that the Genevoise legislative council possessed the right to scorn popular wishes. Gallatin himself personified the ideological clash in Geneva. The scion of aristocrats, he turned his back upon aristocratic thought and desires, and sought in America a perfect world without gradations in its society.

Gallatin, like Jefferson, believed in the genius of Every Man. He believed also that every man was in essence perfect, the house of reason, and the conqueror of the Seven Cardinal Sins. He took, in other words, the impractical view of humanity—the only view which can inspire the search for a political system exalting humanity, the only view that insures a regard for human freedom. Gallatin's impractical view is master in the United States 150 years after he became an American citizen. It is a view abhorrent to the practical National Socialists, who efficiently divide mankind into the elect and the subservient. It is the view that must animate the democratic makers of the new world, when the hopes of fascism will have been buried with the hopes of the Hohenzollerns.

In a broad way, Gallatin and Jefferson stood for the real America as it has developed, an America where the least of men is always considered as having the potentialities of the greatest. Jefferson, remember, was more steeped in the French ideological juices of 1789 than any other influential American. If our nation had developed along the path lighted by the anti-French idea—the Federalists'—perhaps today we would be saying that Gallatin and Jefferson stood for the unreal America. They espoused the policies which the near-aristocratic Federalists opposed. They were the geologico-



## DISCIPLES OF FREEDOM

politicians who sought to fuse the stratifications of society and fashion government from one great rock comprising all the people. Together they made the great West beyond the Mississippi a part of the United States. Out of that West and out of the states near the Mississippi on the river's eastern side has come the native thought which, with the successive waves of ideas from Europe, has developed the American system from what it was in Jefferson's Presidency to what it is in Franklin Roosevelt's.

The Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the Treasury in Washington is marked by a block of marble, which waits to receive the bronze figure of Abrahame Alphonse Albert Gallatin. Before the Treasury's opposite entrance stands, immobilized in lasting statuary, the West Indian, Alexander Hamilton, greatest and most federalistic of the Federalists. When the bronze Gallatin will have been emplaced, he and Hamilton will be standing back to back; and so they stood in real life many years ago. Gallatin, fourth Secretary of the Treasury, criticized the fiscal policies of Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury, and Gallatin attacked Hamilton's political philosophy as well. The liberty which Hamilton sought was the liberty of the nation. Liberty meant, for Gallatin, the liberties of a populace, the great and small within a nation. The Hamilton opinion was crowned by the Constitution of 1787, which bound the thirteen states into one firm country. It was a great political document, but it was vacant of social thought. Gallatin, who admired people above politics, wanted a new Constitution that would protect society as well as glorify the state. He therefore gave his skill and zeal to the movement which superimposed upon the original Constitution the first ten amendments. Now we know them as the Bill of Rights,

and for 150 years they have served to defend the citizens from the ambitions of their government.

So, by their statues' presence and disposition, these sculptured rivals will tell us anew in the middle of the 20th century that the United States was in its earliest years, as it has been in its latest, a scene for struggle between privilege and equality. The same struggle whirls around every man everywhere at every age. It is the nucleus of our war.

The struggle was acute in Geneva in 1761, the year of Gallatin's birth. There are always, somewhere, the cause of Rousseau and the antagonistic cause of the Negatif. Gallatin was 18 when he left Geneva, hoping he might find in America the pure society, with untrammelled freedom, which distinguished Rousseau's conception of the perfect universe. In America he became, besides Secretary of the Treasury, Senator, Congressman, and diplomat. In a day when voters were property-owners, he advocated extension of suffrage to all but paupers and vagabonds. He advocated, almost a century before Pankhurst, feminine participation in public affairs. He advocated general free education. His whole career, grounded on revolt against the aristocratic tyrannies which he had observed but not suffered from in his native Europe, testified to his trust that simple man can govern simple man.

### III

In a later day, at an hour when normal human moral infirmities jeopardized the doctrine of equalitarianism enthroned in Gallatin's time, another son of Europe arose in the United States as the defender of the rights of man. This was Carl Schurz, the German, born in 1829 near "where the Rhine rolls his green waters out of the wonderful gate of the Seven Mountains." When he crossed the sea to America, the Republic's liberties were de-

teriorating from the destructive gnawing not of aristocratic ideas but of corruption, indifference, and greed. He came here as the eloquent man of fire, the romantic revolutionary character, who exhorted a politically listless people to seek anew and then defend the truths propounded by the nation's fathers. A "Forty-eighter," he was the fresh disciple of freedom from afar, the visitor who intended to find in America the perfect state and the perfect society, and who, finding neither, stayed to try to bring perfection.

Schurz grew whiskers in the United States, but he remained a Galahad forever. In an era when the nation was busy with a search for money, opening the great West, turning factories into gold mines, building railroads, Schurz preached of ideals. He kept alive the national sense of political honor during the period when American politics were at their meanest and dullest. The hot flame of love for all people which the Prussian despotism had fanned in him never cooled. He never let Americans forget the magnificent idea of a free society, so dear to and so rare in Europe.

The United States ninety years ago was a disappointing country for a man seeking the mature flower of political freedom and general political wisdom whose seed had been brought from abroad. When Schurz in 1853 visited Washington, he discovered a capital where men sought not to defend ideals but to wangle soft jobs. Politics had degenerated into a road to wealth. Those too weak to make their fortunes in the general scramble tried to make them in public office. Job-seekers outraged democracy, and job-holders stole from the electorate. The young veteran of a fight for freedom was impressed less by the corruption than by the tolerance with which it was observed. But there was greater cause for his dismay. Even the slowest guest in Washington could

see that the political authority of those who spoke for the slave-holders was increasing. Schurz had looked to America as the nation which in time could free the people of the world, but such hopes were repelled by the conviction that a land where the spread of slavery was growing wider could never play crusader to the world.

So, for Europe's sake, Schurz opened his own fight against the American slave-power. He moved to Wisconsin, in the free Northwest. He joined the new Republican Party, founded for free men. He campaigned for Lincoln in 1860 in the name of "liberty, right, and justice." Lincoln was elected. Most of the ballots cast by German Americans went for him. He owed this to Schurz, and Schurz, ambitious, took his reward: appointment at 31 as Minister Plenipotentiary to the decaying court of the Spanish Bourbons. Returning to Germany as a visitor, with the glory of an American and the immunity of an ambassador, liberty still was dear to him. When the Civil War began in the United States, Schurz resigned his post in Spain and went back to Washington, where Lincoln put him into the Union Army as a brigadier general, aged 32.

The war was won, and black men were free. But now Schurz waged a more difficult campaign for human dignity, attacked by a subtler foe than open slavery. The victorious Republicans sought vengeance on the late slave-owners and on the soldiers in the slave-owners' army. Schurz held that these recent enemies of universal freedom should themselves be freed of oppression. He cried "downfall" for the Republican Party which only a few years earlier he had joined as the surety of the American vision.

After the Civil War Schurz was the ardent, often angry, advocate of many unpopular policies. When political interest was not stagnant, it was often preda-

## DISCIPLES OF FREEDOM

tory or venal. Weak men, wicked men, blind men, greedy men grew fat in government. They did not want to be reformed; people did not care whether they were reformed. It was a desert for Schurz, but perhaps without him the desert might have remained a sandy waste. He was the force preparing the way for those in the 20th century who irrigated the political desert. He accomplished one desire: out of remembrance of the corrupt Washington of 1853, he campaigned for the civil service reform which came in 1883. Much more than esteem for simple honesty pricked Schurz to fight for decency in office. Public graft in his estimation was a fetter on liberty, a denial of the Republic's fundamental precepts. He wanted the people to triumph. When Grover Cleveland was nominated for the Presidency in 1892, Schurz told him happily: "You have been nominated by the people over the heads of the politicians."

Schurz' coming to America shows how an idea glues all men together. Without the Revolution of 1848, Schurz might have remained at Bonn, a pedagogue to his death, dwelling pleasantly by the beloved Rhine. But the worldwide chain of events made it different. The idea seeps slowly into the cracks of mankind's consciousness, rousing him to reach for what is new. In England at the end of the 17th century, John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* brought forth a message for the universe. Its theme was liberty, the innate right of the governed to control their governors. It lighted the sky for the hopers in France, for Voltaire and Montesquieu. It inspired Thomas Paine, the Englishman; he wrote warm words in pamphlets that helped provide the American revolutionaries with an ideological foundation for their fight against the English. The enthronement of liberty in America proved to the French libertarians

that what they desired could exist; and the victory at Yorktown heralded the convention of the National Assembly in Paris. The Revolution of 1789 provided France with a precedent which served for the overthrow of King Louis Philippe in 1848; and that overthrow in Paris, setting Europe on fire from the Straits of Messina to the mouth of the Elbe, inspired the German revolution which sent Schurz to America.

## IV

Gallatin helped establish liberty as a political system. Schurz, despite the inattention which his preachings met, protected the established liberty. In an imperfect age he kept visible the aim of perfection. We owe him much. We need now another man, one who can teach us how to fit the established and long-protected structure of political liberties into a scheme for economic security, for this is the foremost question of our time. Germany in search of economic security delivered itself into the hands of the National Socialists. France in search of political liberty drowned itself with the millstone of the Third Republic. Too often the government that protects is the government that tyrannizes. But in the 20th century government must protect. How restrain it from tyranny? This is the problem upon which philosophers should feed their minds. This is the problem from which the new idea must come.

Will it come from America? Or will it come from Europe? Perhaps from Europe. Europe thinks; we act. Our genius is in the use of the ideas we want and the application of schemes which please us. Our genius, too, is in the rejection of ideas disagreeable.

The 20th century is the century of insecurity. We in America discovered that sad fact years after hunger and idleness and restlessness had forced its acquaint-

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ance upon Europe. As the European thinkers formed an ideology of liberty because they did not have liberty, so European economists formed schemes for economic security because they did not have security. We are indebted to Europe for these schemes, as our forefathers were indebted for the idea. We must thank her for public housing, public insurance, public work. In a recent conversation with representatives of American management and labor, President Roosevelt remarked that "eight or nine years ago we were rather far behind in this country" in the field of labor relations. "England was ahead of us," he said. "The Scandinavian countries were ahead of us." Europe gave us our first powerful labor leader, Samuel Gompers, the English Jew. For the nine years of the Roosevelt Administration we have felt here the effect of the social-economic thinking of the Englishman John Maynard Keynes. Europe gave us the literature of compassion and the literature of disaffection which now together spur America and the world in the search for security. The prose of English Thomas Carlyle and William Morris and Bernard Shaw and the rambling outcries of German Karl Marx in *Das Kapital* have kept the United States aware of the soul-and-body-agonies of a great part of the membership of the human race.

We are the people who can show Eu-

rope how to use the ideas and schemes which we have received. Indeed, for our salvation, we had better show Europe how to use them, and we ourselves had better seek diligently for the new idea. The events of 1941 proved to us that our lives are irrefutably bound with the lives of those abroad. The ambitions of Napoleon, the ambitions of a Hohenzollern, the ambitions of Hitler have all brought blows to America. A disturbance on the Danube means that in time the Potomac will be disturbed. A secure Europe, as well as a secure Africa, a secure Asia, and a secure Australia, all defended from foreign ambition and protected from internal frenzy, is essential to our own security.

The world at this dark hour is twice illuminated—by the bursts of bombs and by the light of hope, which shines out from the United States. Back to Europe and its cabined peoples goes the light of America, land of faith in the sovereignty of individual man. It makes us proud and humble and, we hope, thoughtful that the ancient continents expect of the United States both deliverance from the horrid present and the plan for the perfect future.

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Blair Bolles is diplomatic correspondent for *The Washington Star* and a frequent contributor to national magazines.

## THE DEMOCRATIC EFFORT

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

IT IS important to that little-understood and intangible thing called civilian morale that we should apply ourselves to the task of drawing our people, in whom there are so many different racial strains, closer together instead of letting them drift apart and be divided by their backgrounds because of the war. We have prided ourselves for years on our ability as a country to live and work together peacefully, regardless of where our forebears came from, or when they came; and we have felt our success in this an example to the world.

There is one large group in the United States which now can help us greatly on morale—the people who have lived through some years of the war in other countries, or the years preliminary to the actual war. Their experiences can be of great value to us, and we should not fail to make use of them.

Most of these people, of course, come in the category of aliens under the law; yet they are here in our country with us, and their morale is therefore just as important as that of citizens. It does not help this morale for us to be thinking of them as aliens and treating them as such. As citizens we must keep reminding ourselves that at one time our ancestors were also newcomers to this country and “aliens” too, that most of the people to whom the term now applies came to the United States many years ago to make their homes here. The more recent comers are with us because they were considered the enemies of their undemocratic governments and were therefore persecuted.

Here they are eager to join in the fight for democracy.

Yet in spite of their eagerness to help and be part of us as a united nation defending ourselves against aggression and oppression, we read in the Help Wanted advertisements that “Aliens need not apply.” We hear of employers who are discharging admittedly loyal and efficient workers merely because they are not citizens or because they have foreign-sounding names. We hear of communities where those who are not citizens under the law are not permitted to take part in local civilian defense activities. In addition to this, now come the rigid war-time regulations and restrictions upon the conduct and freedoms of those who came here from nations with which we are now at war.

We know—and so do they—that the greatest care must be taken in these perilous days. But I am concerned with the possible consequences if we do not make every effort to differentiate between the many loyal American non-citizens and the comparatively few who may be truly alien to our way of life.

A similar problem of morale concerns us and our citizens who stem from German, Italian, and Japanese backgrounds. The war situation is very difficult for them and for us. A small minority in these groups have not been loyal; and this, of course, puts the loyal ones on the defensive, and the suspicion with which they are regarded alienates them from the democratic effort. As citizens of a democ-

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racy we must not set ourselves up as judges of other individuals. Being bitter against an American because of the actions of the country of his predecessors does not make for unity and the winning of the war. We must learn to think of the people in these groups as individuals, not as groups; we must treat them as individuals. They, on their part, have an obligation to refuse to listen to arguments and false statements made by agents of our enemies who will try to trade on any unfairness or bitterness. They have an obligation equal with the rest of us of making sure of the sources of their information.

The same Bill of Rights covers all our citizens, regardless of the country of origin. For basic civilian morale we need to stress, through every medium of expression that we have, understanding and consideration and acceptance of people as individuals. We cannot afford to have any number of our citizens in a position where it is hard for them wholeheartedly to accept and endorse democracy as a form of government and a way of life. The Gov-

ernment has agencies which can be trusted to guard against the few who will be disloyal. We must remember that we cannot tell the difference between a loyal and a disloyal citizen or between a citizen and a non-citizen just by looking at him or his name, by seeing the color of his skin, or by hearing him talk.

We have a great task ahead—the winning of this war. We have the even greater task of proving to the world that democracy does work—can work for all the world—in order that we may hold out hope for the future to oppressed people everywhere. Walt Whitman wrote years ago that America is “a nation of nations.” Therein lies our strength. If we do not want to create “nations within a nation,” if we wish a united spirit and united defense so essential to ultimate victory, we must judge and act only on the true tests of loyalty, usefulness, and love of America.

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*Mrs. Roosevelt is Honorary Chairman of the National Committee of the Common Council for American Unity.*

## THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CREED

MIKE MASAOKA

I AM proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has given me an education befitting kings. She has entrusted me with the responsibilities of the franchise. She has permitted me to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to worship, think, speak, and act as I please—as a free man equal to every other man.

Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way: above-board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.

Because I believe in America, and I trust she believes in me, and because I have received innumerable benefits from her, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheerfully and without any reservations whatsoever, in the hope that I may become a better American in a greater America.

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*Mike Masaoka is national secretary and field executive for the Japanese American Citizens League. This creed was read before the United States Senate and printed in the Congressional Record, May 9, 1941.*



## AFTER PEARL HARBOR—

### LOS ANGELES

MARY OYAMA

IT COULDN'T be true! The mythical Japanese American war which we Nisei and Japanese had never dreamed could really happen. There was a hard paralyzing stone inside of me.

My young sister-in-law, Sayeko, telephoned. She was the only one of her family here; her mother and father and older brother were all in Japan. The tears in her voice frightened me and I hung up quickly lest I weep, too.

Things happened fast. All the Japanese newspapers were suspended. Many persons lost their jobs. Japanese business went with the wind. Assets were frozen; checks came trickling back. Los Angeles' Little Tokyo was a ghost city; Issei and Nisei alike were afraid to venture out into the streets. Armed guards were thrown around Japanese town "for protection of Japanese nationals."

Nationals and their American-born sons and daughters went about with funeral faces. Suspected aliens were rounded up en masse, swiftly and efficiently by the FBI. The Japanese nationals were left leaderless in this bewildering hour; all the prominent people of the community were taken into custody. In the jails, crowded to overflowing, some committed suicide. A few were guilty, we do not doubt; but others—old people—clutched at death in their fear of persecution. One Issei hanged herself in her cell with her stocking.

My father's business, which depended upon the patronage of Japanese stores, was shot to pieces. My brothers' business,

which was import and trade with Japan, was equally dead. Sister Lili's father-in-law, prominent in the Japanese community, was interned pending check-up and investigation. With the head of the family taken away, the young 21-year-old daughter was left as sole support of her mother and two younger brothers. Two older brothers were unable to help financially, as one was in the United States Army and the other interning at a hospital in Kentucky.

My husband was out of a job—Fred who had never been out of work even during the worst years of the Depression. Every day after the Japanese newspapers were suspended, for which he had been employed as a radio operator, he went out job hunting—to all the factories, the defense industries, the NBC listening post, Federal Communications, all the employment agencies both private and state; he followed the want-ads in the papers—in town and out. Every day. . . .

Young Nisei wives had visions of being turned out into the streets, of having their down-payment stoves, furniture, cars, etc. hauled away; their gas, electricity, and water turned off. Expectant mothers were terrified at the thought of not being able to bear their babies in hospitals. And worst of all to Japanese pride, they might have to go on relief.

Fred and I might even lose our new house. Though unpretentious, it is beautiful to us as the fulfillment of a dream, as a symbol of our roots here in these



## AFTER PEARL HARBOR

United States. I had thought it was only in old-fashioned melodramas that people lost their homes. . . .

Yet we Americans with Japanese faces would rather be here in the United States than in the motherland of our parents. Most of us have never been to Japan. The only home we have ever known is a composite of the sweet damp fog of San Francisco, the poppy fields of Kern, the sun-bathed beaches of Southern California, the hot grape-sweetening sun of Fresno, the evergreen coolness of the Pacific Northwest. How can we be loyal to something we have never seen—Japan?

An unbelievable stroke of circumstances makes me, Mary Teiko Oyama, whose parents came from Fukushima, Japan, an American citizen. This, to me, is such an overwhelming fact in itself that the exciting novelty of it never wears off. I can not really be hurt by unthinking people who call us Nisei "Japs," by residential restrictions, by restaurants which sometimes

refuse to seat us, by firms which will not employ us. Such things will not always be.

There is ample proof of this in the way the crisis has brought out even more warmly the forthright friendship of my fellow-Americans—old-stock and new. They have gone out of their way, over and over again, to prove their loyalty by quiet thoughtful action.

After this stressful period of inevitably intensified prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination, we hope for—and we fight for—a new era wherein we Nisei will be accepted as full-fledged Americans. By that time we will have proved our loyalty; our Nisei soldiers will have died to preserve the ideals of the only country we know. Somehow we will see this hard interlude through.

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*Mary Oyama is a frequent contributor to the English-language sections of Japanese newspapers on the West Coast.*

## NEW YORK CITY

### TOORU KANAZAWA

SOMEBODY was pulling a hoax. The news over the radio had the unreal quality of Orson Welles' Martian broadcast, of something out of the pulps. We played contract bridge mechanically, and listened.

On the subway going home, the gate-man mistook me for Chinese. "Now we are going to give them hell," he said. "I hope we do it quick," I replied. He opened the door and closed it again at a station. The train roared on its way. He leaned toward me. "The Mayor has ordered them all to stay home," he said, looking at me from the corner of his eye. "Yeah," I said.

I felt self-conscious; every eye was upon me, and I was glad to reach my apartment. A detective and two FBI men stopped me in the lobby but okayed me after looking at my Class 1B draft registration card. They went upstairs and apparently arrested someone from their list. About a hundred Japanese nationals were picked up that night for questioning, and now more than two hundred from New York City and vicinity have come before the hearing board at Ellis Island. Some innocent ones may be among those seized, but this is no time to take chances: saboteurs and fifth-column agents must be apprehended.

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The day we declared war I spent at the office of our Committee for Democratic Treatment for Japanese Residents in Eastern States. We sent telegrams to President Roosevelt, Governor Lehman, Mayor La Guardia, and news releases to the papers, reaffirming our loyalty to the United States and condemning the treacherous Japanese attack. Our Committee was the only Issei organization left functioning in New York City. The offices of the Japanese Association and Japanese Chamber of Commerce, the groups to which the Issei would normally turn for assistance in the crisis, were raided and padlocked and their officers taken to Ellis Island. As a democratic, anti-fascist organization, our Committee remained unmolested. It was formed last spring by long-time Issei residents, loyal to America, their adopted land. Its work was directed at Japanese nationals who might be misled by Japanese propaganda, and attempted to help Americanize them, help them take an active part in American community life. It sought also to acquaint Americans generally with the existence of strongly democratic, anti-fascist Japanese.

Now, after Pearl Harbor, the Issei were ordered to remain at home. We Nisei had to carry on. We held a mass meeting on December 10 at International House, with the co-operation of the New York Police Department and the local office of the FBI. We drew up resolutions of loyalty, reorganized ourselves into the Japanese American Committee for Democracy; and now we are pitching into the difficult work ahead.

Our major problem is and will be economic. Practically ninety per cent of the Nisei here were thrown out of jobs. Slowly they are trickling back to their homes on the West Coast. A few hardy ones remain, hoping that American stores and firms will heed the pleas of President Roosevelt and Attorney General Biddle not to

discriminate against enemy aliens or citizens of enemy stock. But their chances are slim. The plight of about 300 unattached Issei, who earned a precarious livelihood even in the best of times, is even more serious. Many face privation and starvation; one committed suicide in a local hotel because he had no hope of help. Our Committee has been recognized by the city welfare department and is informing and directing these Issei as to the proper procedure in getting relief.

It is our grim jest that those on Ellis Island and those destined for concentration camps may be better off than the rest of us. They will at least have their three meals a day. However, reports from the West Coast indicate that slowly the Issei as well as the Nisei are resuming their businesses, though these are reduced fifty to seventy-five per cent.

What am I going to do? I am subject to the draft. I will leave my wife to take up arms when the Army calls me. We Nisei realize our obligations and duties as American citizens. More and more of us are going into the Army, volunteering for civilian defense posts, working at home to keep up the morale of our group, which has so far been hardest hit by the war.

We are all engaged in this war for democracy. We believe in it. We want to see it stamp out prejudice and discrimination which are symptoms of the very thing we are fighting—fascism. And when the war is finally over, we know it will be found that we Japanese Americans have acquitted ourselves creditably and honorably in the defense of our country.

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*The Issei (i = first, sei = generation) are Japanese nationals unable to become citizens by U.S. law; the Nisei (ni = second) are their American-born children.*

# I AM ALIVE

SATOKO MURAKAMI

How good to be alive in this very moment of the earth when conditions are extremely difficult for men to live. But I, I am alive. I am alive in this changing world. I am not subsisting for someone who does not believe in common man and who dictates the lives of others; but I am living in America where common people have the right and responsibility to take part in their society. With my fullest realization of its privileges and rights, and with deep appreciation, I live in America.

I was born in California but, as a result of my mother's death and my father's second marriage, I was sent to Japan as an infant to be brought up in the home of relatives. I grew up as an ordinary Japanese girl and never imagined coming back to America until I began to think and question for myself.

I was in Japan for fifteen years. At the time, living in the changing air of that country, I did not know for sure what was happening, but I felt heavy fog in front of me. I began to wonder why the people had such a poor life in the darkness, burning their nails to live on. I could find no explanation in the Japanese school, where traces of feudalism still had a large influence. There was no relationship between school learning and the social life of man. The teachers did not dare explain, even if a student raised questions, which was seldom for he knew his name would be put on the black-list.

The study of Japanese history, for example, started out from fantastic myth with no scientific basis and with no personal interpretation allowed the instructor. Students learned what happened in the beautiful past according to a thin, dry text-book. They were never allowed to ask why things had happened as they did, what was the basic system of various ages. Aside from Japanese history they learned the facts about Darwin, Lincoln, and other great men of humanity, but ordinarily the historical development of man's thinking was not related to their own thinking. There was a thick cloud between truth and people.

This was true in my school. I had no one to ask why—because of fear. The ordinary Japanese girl does not raise such questions; it is not good manners. So I read books, passed the gates of several religions, and met those who opposed the Japanese way and dreamed of an unimaginable land. Their dreams had too much of emotion and were not kind enough to ordinary men. I had to search for myself. I wanted knowledge of a land where people lived more decently than where I was. I say "knowledge"; there was no hope to see practice of it in Japan.

For Japanese tradition does not believe in society for all men, but in all men for society. The nation was pictured as one family where the father possessed entire right and power. The majority of the people had nothing to do under the fundamental right of the state but follow a

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few leaders. They existed from day to day. They asked little and received no information about the relationship of man and society. Just before the Manchurian incident, the voice to ask started to grow. It took shape as a labor movement, which often was extreme in action and emotion, as in any place where people have been blinded and pressed down for long and not allowed their freedom. The movement was suppressed violently, and Japan had chosen the road which she is taking now.

I felt and saw this change, the struggle between the freedom-asking group and the slave-loving totalitarian group. The pressure upon the individual became heavier and the voice of public opinion smaller and smaller. Familiar names that represented questioning disappeared from public notice. I felt suffocation. I wanted to get out from the dark, melancholic fog. I wanted to find bright sunshine under which I could breathe, see, and walk freely.

So I came back to America.

What did I find? At first the deepest disappointment I have ever known. I was particularly disappointed in my family and their environment. My father, in turn, was unhappy and disappointed in me. He had expected to see a little Japanese doll he could decorate and show to other people as a properly-educated daughter, but I turned out to be an odd girl for a Japanese, with only the desire to study social matters. He had the common belief that a person who raises questions over social problems is dangerous. As for me, I tried to go out from feudalism and jump immediately into another age. Stormy weather started from the first night in my father's house. I went to a Buddhist church to please him, and I even taught Sunday school as if I were a faithful believer in Buddhism, but I hated to lie to naive and pure children

and myself. I had no friend to talk or listen to. My day came and went in a sea of darkness.

But through the darkness I kept going to school; it was the only place I could be free and be myself. How fascinated I was when I studied American history for the first time! Reading with my meager English vocabulary, I picked up the general idea and a few adjectives which illuminated for me a new, healthy, promiseful, and brilliant world. I had not dared imagine the existence of such a nation. I felt as if I had been living inside of a ball in pitch darkness and cold air, while, outside, the ball enjoyed the pouring sunshine and warmth.

Nothing could have affected me and led me toward the light as the American school. For the first time, in my Pacific Relations course in Santa Maria High School, I saw young people expressing themselves honestly, eagerly, and intelligently on international affairs. They studied living conditions, they discussed and questioned fearlessly under the teaching of Mark Jennings, in whom I found the real American, a person of the highest ideals, the deepest human understanding, and actions that were proof of what he thought and said. Often students and instructor were one. It was beautiful.

Here I gained my belief in common man who takes part in his society. The state exists for the people, by the people, of the people. Man is able to take steps toward a better society in co-operation with others. He is far better than the people of the past, I began to believe. Things may push back for a little, but on the whole there is progress.

Yet now the days are stormy. Hope for a better world has in many places disappeared into the sky, and the fire of struggle has been sweeping the earth. Where is the world going, we ask? What

kind of a life is coming to its creatures?

People get tired and disappointed. They have had high ideals but somehow have never built a bridge across the distance between real life and the ideal—to tomorrow. They become cynical and hardly give warm welcome to the ideas of youth. They look indulgent and they say: "When you are in school, you have high ideals and are eager to try them out, but they mean nothing in a realistic world. Young, proud, and idealistic, your journey in the world will have numberless scars and be carved by disillusion. By the time you are 35 you will have lost both your ideals and dreams. You will have found out human stubbornness."

But there is no creation by cynical emotions and attitudes. Progress may be slow and hardly realized, yet its relative upwardness can be found in the long record of our history. In 1939, for instance, the president of the Civil Liberties Union announced that the exercise of civil liberty had reached its highest point in American history and in the world. We should be proud to have lived when this was true.

The stream of time never stops. It may rush away with muddy water; it may run gently into a lake or be frozen as a glacier for a long long time; but the chemical composition of water will never change in any of these conditions. The desire for a better world is the water of humanity. It will keep running in the heart of people as long as men survive. I can see traces of it in the thickness of history. People who lived it may not be well-known and great. But the fact of their existence is the finest encouragement I can get.

## II

With a presentiment of the danger of world-wide storm, I hoped deeply that America would not participate in any

form of world struggle, for she had, I thought, the great responsibility to lead and to help reconstruct the world into a more decent, more healthful, happier place for common people. I believed America was the only nation on earth capable of undertaking this task with fairness and understanding and intelligence—all difficult to maintain once a nation has taken sides against another and fallen into the emotional thinking and acts which almost inevitably lose sight of the good of all men.

But now in December 1941 I must face the most unexpected, the most cruel, the most merciless reality—that America, our America, has been invaded by the Japanese. When I heard the sudden news, my thought ran like lightning over the lost struggle of the peace-loving, fair-minded common people of Japan these last ten years. Since the Manchurian incident their elections have gradually been in name only, and every change of cabinet has shifted toward the right under the name of emergency. The treacherous invasion by the Japanese Government was treachery not only to America but also to the civilians of Japan.

Then my thought ran out to the Japanese immigrants in America, who still have no legal rights after thirty to forty years of residence in this country. Despite their handicaps and difficulties, many of them deeply believe in democracy. Even those who, discouraged, went back to Japan recently, found they could no longer live there. They came back to America after only two or three months. What lies ahead of them now? How will they live?

My thoughts flooded especially over the Nisei, the Japanese Americans—born, grown, and educated here—young, healthy, intelligent Americans, often not given a chance to serve society as they want and can. Under this unexpected unhappy situation, what will happen to their positive

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beliefs in America? What is waiting for them? Will they have an even rockier, even more stormy road before them?

The first few days after December 7, all the young Nisei in my school—high school to junior college age—completely forgot to smile. But the whole school acted beautifully toward us. There was not a single unpleasant emotional outburst among the students, despite the exaggerated rumors afloat in the town. Once again I received confidence and light toward America and her people in an American school.

The attitude of the Government to the Nisei heartened me too. Legal rights and privileges are theirs naturally; yet when I think of other nations, my appreciation toward America deepens.

As for the Nisei themselves, they are sensitive but calm, and are taking the situation with good courage. They do not ask pity or sympathy. They ask only to be treated as the rest of Americans, to serve as the rest of Americans may serve. The very evening of the Japanese invasion came resolutions of loyalty to America by the Nisei in the JACL, the Japanese American Citizens League.

Men make war; but men also think how to avoid war for a positive humanity. We did our best to prevent this conflict; but we are invaded by a force which tries to turn the progressing world toward the suffering past. Men must stand up and

fight or else be chained under the frightful system of modern slavery, which cannot be measured by past experience.

Including every thought and desire for the betterment of the world, we—the freedom-loving peoples—must have our way. We cannot let those who believe in aggressive war have their way—those who believe in securing peace by subjugation, in spreading and developing their culture by destroying others, in enslaving the population of the world for only their prosperity. We can not let their way materialize, for its effect and influence over the whole of man will be frightful: it will take hundreds of years to recover what we now possess in our present civilization.

In having our way, however, we must not make the mistake we made after the first world war. We must go all the way this time, with our American spirit—fair, intelligent, co-operative, scientific, thoughtful—accepting all people as people—to bring the better world of tomorrow. America can do this. America can serve to unite and build a higher, wider, happier world for common people, as she has done on her own new continent.

I am profoundly thankful to be living in this country at this very hour.

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*Satoko Murakami returned to the United States in 1935 and is now a Sophomore in the Junior College in Santa Maria, California.*



## NEW ENGLAND TOWN MEETING

HARRIETTE WILBURN

ALMINA CHASE ANNIS was waiting for me beside her mailbox. Tall, erect, somewhat heavy below the waist, she wore a white dimity, sprigged with red flowers, unfashionable and womanly. The ruffles at her wrists and throat, the jet earrings, the black velvet neck-band fastened under a garnet brooch, and her bright black eyes relieved what might have been austerity.

"It pleasures me like two of a kind to have you supper with me," she greeted me. "I pusseled up new recruits of home-made cookies and bread this morning, and I have milk and applesauce—"

"And here's cheese and a head-lettuce!" I said. Already I knew that New Hampshireans of the old school never make a call unless they can "carry something," usually eatables.

Mrs. Annis laughed. "I apperhend Westerners admire cheese with applesauce same as here. Let's put your car in the garage and visit late. It's stood empty seven years now, except when comers and goers stall cars there while visiting me. . . . I sold our car at auction after James, my husband, went."

She took me on a tour of her buildings—the barn, haymow, cattle "hovel," pigsty, the "henpen," the detached corncrib stilted on corner posts of handhewn granite, and the spacious century-and-more-old house with its green window-blinds, built to entertain "comers and goers" when travel was slow and farmsteads far apart.

"I be downing viands like a hired hand," she said later at supper, "and enjoying it. I hope you'll fetch your typewriter and spend days with me. And if you plan to be in these parts come spring, I want you should go with me to the Annual Town Meeting in the Village—the third Wednesday in March that comes. It be a big event with us—Town Meeting."

"I'll be here, and I want to go," I said. "Something I read has always stuck with me. John Adams was talking to a Virginian who was lamenting the inferiority of his state to New England, and Adams told him: 'I can give you a recipe for making a New England of Virginia—Town Meetings, training days, Town schools, and ministers. . . .'"

Her black eyes shone. "Ummm, training days be gone by with long ago—passé, I mean. While I taught country school, I stuck tight to my high school grammar and dictionary words—I graduated in 1876. But after I worked in the glove and overalls factory in the Village to be home with the old folks when the last of the nine other chicks went scratching for themselves, I relapsed into old-timey talk. . . . But how I gabble on! Those other three ingredients of John Adams' receipt still shape New England customs—and viewpoints and backbones too."

"I expect so. I've already gathered that you New Englanders have almost a reverence for Town Meetings and Selectmen."

"Ummm," she crooned. "We've al-

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ways had both, from the first. And we uphold both because we believe they make for good democratic government in local matters. We always elect honest, upstanding, well-regarded citizens to the office. James were a Seelectman for years. He were Moderator—that be presiding officer—of Town and Seelectmen Meetings when he passed away. That be the complimentingest office in the Town. . . .

"I wonder what they'll vote for support of the paupers at Town Meeting next spring. There be so many more now-days, with reliefers added. It eats up Town funds amazingly, and don't you think it doesn't." Mrs. Annis sighed as she chewed reflectively. "But we've always had town poor on our hands, did way back when this community were part of Massachusetts. We can look over some of the old records this evening. They be funny as two of a kind with their droll spelling and such."

After supper Mrs. Annis selected a Town History from a shelf of Town Meeting Reports, and we went into the sitting-room, a square, high-ceilinged room with a double front window overlooking the Hill Road, the valley, and the opposite ridge. It was a homelike place with a marble-topped table, cushioned rockers, antique secretary bookcase, old-fashioned sewing machine, a wall telephone, a huge highly-polished Glenwood heater, an almanac and the current Town Meeting Report hanging from a convenient hook in the frame of the front window. Hand-made rugs were spread generously over the ingrain carpet. When she saw me admiring them, she said, "Mrs. Senator Fuller has broached me a standing offer of nine hundred dollars for all my rugs. But I need rugs underfoot as much as Mrs. Senator Fuller, and I be too played out now, with rheumatiz and bad scraps with my heart, to recruit others. Morebetoken,

my mother and James' made some of them, and I couldn't tolerate their pictures looking down on empty places.

"Ummm, I'll just browse through this History to read you bits here and there. Then you can study it and the old Town Meeting Reports of later years, whenever you want. . . .

"Our Town were Number One, granted in 1736 by the Massachusetts Council to sixty persons living around Amesbury, near the east coast. Here it says: 'The grantees chose a committee from their number to parcel out the grant and the Selected Men proceeded to the wilderness.'"

"Selectmen," I exclaimed.

"Ummm. And here it tells that in 1737 Rev. Paine Wingate was chosen Moderator for the meeting, 'and ye committy brought in a Record of that they had laid out . . . which was received and voted on ye firmative.' But it seems like words soon ran high, and one grantee, Jarvis Ring, told Rev. Wingate, 'Ye be college larnt, I know, but there be men here that can beat you in and out on the law.' " Her black eyes twinkled. "You'll hear similars at our March Meeting, I apperhend.

"Ummm, and here's this, the same year: 'Voted to have our Annuall Meeting on ye third Wednesday in March Annually.'"

"In 1737? No wonder Town Meeting is a hallowed institution!"

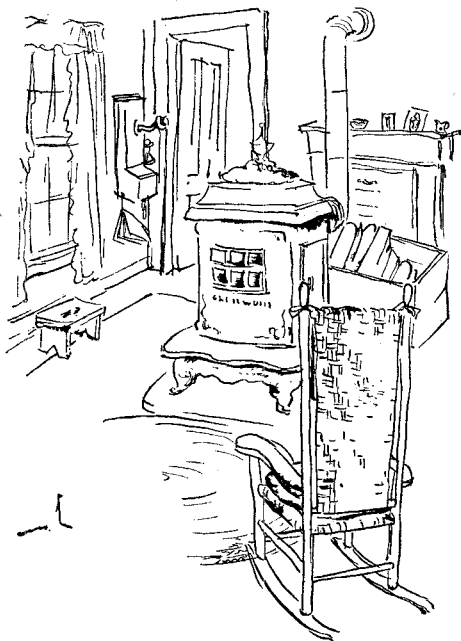
"You be getting the idea," she chuckled. "Well, the Indians burned the grantees' first efforts before the settlers could move in. And then the French and Indian War added to the dissensions amongst them. So the first settlers didn't get here until 1763. They was Reuben Kimball and Daniel Annis. He were James' forebear.

"The Town poor be in the reports



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early. Here's this in March, 1763: 'Voted to give Seth Goodwin \$15, under his distressed condition.' But that 'distressed condition' must have mended, for you see here, in 1772, after the first meeting-house were burned and the pew-ground for the new building sold to get funds for build-



ing the new one, Pew No. 6 were struck off to Seth for 23 shillings, while Dea. Nehemiah Heath got Pew No. 3 for only 17 shillings. But maybe Seth were just too aled up. . . .

"And here are the first officers after the Town were incorporated in 1775: 'Voted that Captain Daniel Flood should be the first Selectman for the present year.' That means Moderator; the other two were Thomas Annis and Abner Chase. 'Voted that Capt. Daniel Flood be tything man . . . that Paskey Pressey should be Field Driver . . . that Daniel Currier be Fence Viewer . . . mr. Daniel Annis sen. should be Sevear [Surveyor] of the Highways . . . Isaac Waldron Junior should be Hogg

Reef . . . Moses Clark should be Leather Sealler . . . Mr. Daniel Annis be Sealler of waits and measures.'

"And here be a corker: '1776. Voted that the Selectmen should procure a Book to keep the Records of the Town and to record the Children and the mark of the Beast in.' Birth and deaths, of course.

"Here they 'Voted to give the two men we should hire to serve in the Continental Army for three years, one hundred dollars each man this Day hiered—Philip Rowell and Aquila Davis.' And you recall the new Constitution were submitted to the thirteen states for ratification in September 1787? Well, the Town voted first at a special Meeting not to 'except' it but to 'chuse a man to Joine a Convention at Exeter on the 2d Wednesday in February next on account of the New Constitution.' But you see here at the Annual March Meeting it were 'Voted to Except of the new Constitution,' and the State did the same the following June.

"Here's Town poor again: '1789. Voted that the Poor of the Town be set up at auction. Struck off the support of the Poor for the year to Moses Harriman at \$294. Voted that the Selectmen be a Committee to examine the cloathes of the paupers, and to see that they are treated with humanity.' . . . And in 1791 they 'Voted that the Seelectmen Should Converse with John O. Ballard and Samuel Ballard to Examon and try wether they are of an a Bility according to law to support theire farther for the futur and See if it be not theire Right by Law to support him.'

"There be a flock of items about schools. Here, for instance, in 1791: 'Voted to chuse a Committee to Enspect and examon the School masters that may be heired to teach Schools in this Town for Ensuing year wether they be Qualified as the Law Directs.'

"And wars and soldiers kept them busy, I apperhend. '1813. Voted to sell at auc-

tion the support of soldiers muster day to the lowest Bidder. Struck off to Benj. Evans at 20 cents for each soldier.' . . . Civil War's here, too: '1862. Voted to authorize the Selectmen to borrow a sum not exceeding \$10,000 to pay the bounty to volunteers.' And in 1863, 'Voted three cheers to Gen. Sherman and his Army for taking Atlanta.'

"But you'll have to study the Reports for yourself. The Town kept the Selectmen pretty busy. Still does. Apperhend you'll see. . . ."

Mrs. Annis and I had many visits before the third Wednesday in March. Her neighbors often told me, "Almina Annis could sell her timber in The Gore and on her farm and live high, instead of meagering along like she does." Her eyes bored into me one evening to discover what I had heard. She said, too casually, "I apperhend it be town talk that I could sell my standing timber like hot cakes to any of several loggers that keep hectoring me to sell."

"Isn't that strictly your own affair?" I parried.

"Should be. Well none will pay me any cash until the lumber be cut and sold, and I'd have a touse getting my money, if ever. So I keep holding off for full cash on the barrel-head before an ax touches my timber. That be the way Father and James did business, and it prospered them in the long run. They'd no dealings with fly-by-nights, and wa'n't left holding any empty bags or suing for their pay.

"The paint be peeling from my buildings and nails popping from board-ends here and there like hedgehog quills. It worries me times. I hate to see things getting delapirous; so would Father and James. If I could paint them myself, I'd do it and don't you think I wouldn't."

Her farm income was negligible—a quart of milk every other day and her

yearly firewood cut, but not sawed, by her tenant, Ai Flanders, a dairyman at the near end of the Village. He cropped her cornfield and hayfield, kept hay in her mow, and extra "milkers" in the "hovel" end of her barn.

"Ai be hard put to it, with five to feed and educate and a weakly wife. We don't publish our terms. It be nobody's business but ours, and it satisfactions me to have folks think he pays me a spanking rental. Other landless men'd be hectoring me to replace Ai with them, if they knew the truth. So I let them all suppose Ai's rental pays my taxes. He be easy on the buildings, mows my yard twice each summer, shovels paths in winter if I don't outbest him to it, and it comforts me that if he doesn't see me each day, his wife phones to see if all's right with me."

Insurance and repairs on her buildings, her living expenses, and her annual taxes of almost five hundred dollars had to come from her savings in various banks, accumulated years previously through teaching, factory work, dairy profits. Modest inheritances and the auction of her farm machinery had added to her total. But one bank's unwise speculation in Wyoming land had recently resulted in a possible loss and certainly a long tie-up of about one-third of her savings.

So, cramped for spending money, she conserved her savings in silent martyrdom to "town talk" rather than have it "town talk" she was forced to penny-pinching.

Once she said, "I held my auction soon after James went. I felt so lonely hived up here with all his things continually reminding me of him. I've always wanted to travel, and I expected I'd sell the farm and dust off out West, maybe to California. But I've never got a cash offer I could trust, and I won't sell on a mortgage or rent and maybe have to take the place back all stove to pieces. Then I began failing some years back, and as I have to live

## NEW ENGLAND TOWN MEETING

somewheres, I'm better off toughing it out here. I don't tell folks—not even my sister—but I plan to mortgage the place and eat and live it up if I outlast my savings. My worst nightmare be having to go on the Town in my old age.”

Late in the winter Village agitation ran high over purchasing a snowplow rather than continuing to rent one from the County Board of Road Supervisors.

“I apperhend the Seelectmen'll take that up at Town Meeting,” she told me.

None of her neighbors knew how she would vote on the snowplow question. When callers decried the expenditure, she merely murmured a non-committal “Ummm.” I knew she favored the purchase and wondered why she didn't throw in her influence to sway the voters.

One morning the last week in February, she phoned me. “An old-timey blizzard be predicted for tonight. So bring your typewriter and weather it out here with me.”

Great flakes fell all afternoon and night. She kept saying, as she stoked the Glenwood heater, “Job Colby'll have a long wait for the County snowplow. But once he gets it, he'll keep it going around the clock till he gets every road in the Town cleared out. He be a rattling good road man, and I hope for his re-election at Town Meeting. But I hear considerable opposition be mounting against him from three less experienced candidates that crave the job and salary.”

We were snowbound, except as I plowed through hip-high snow to the Village. At dusk of the second day following the end of the storm, we heard the rented plow growling up the hill and watched its lights peer over the crest beside her barn. As the ponderous monster trudged past her windows, Mrs. Annis waved and smiled to Job Colby and his crew.

“I'd like the worst way to be aboard that contraption, and running it, too,” she cried. “Write a poem about it for the Kearsarge Lookout! Editor Miles won't pay you a cent, of course, but—”

“All right,” I told her. “Let's end each verse with:

*While over and over rings out this refrain,  
'Job Colby is digging us out again!' ”*

“Just the checker!”

Our poem was published, to her delight, and aroused much comment. She wore out one copy of the issue, reading the verse to all callers and even over the telephone—though I didn't grasp her tactics.

When she asked the rural delivery carrier if he'd read it, he said, “Ummm, and I mention it along my route. I apperhend it'll recruit votes for Job and the snowplow purchase. Hope so. The back country roads be impassable after heavy snow until the County gets around to renting Job a plow.”

Once, after reading the poem to someone on the phone, her “Ummms” became sharply non-committal and her spine and shoulders stiffened. “Ummm-mpi!” she exclaimed as she hung up the receiver. “Dorcas Sawyer said it'll take more'n a poem to re-elect Job Colby and purchase a snowplow. She be agin both. . . . That Dorcas Sawyer fancies herself a power in the Town. . . . Ummm. . . .”

As Town Meeting day drew near, she coached me on various items: “The new Baptist minister'll give the invocation. That be the place of honor, as more hear it than the benediction. The Baptist ladies be tan-toasting the young man and eating him up generally, as always with a new preacher. . . . ‘Tan-toasting?’ Ummm, 'twere one of Grandsir Chase's expressions. Toasting to a nice tan with attention and approval, I apperhend.

## COMMON GROUND

"The Methodist Ladies' Aid'll purvey the eatables at noon dinner. The Baptist Aid purveyed last year, and next year it'll be the Eastern Star. Turn-about spares hard feelings. Your eyes'll bug out when you see all you get for thirty cents a plate



—even to free second helpings. They'll have everything you can put a name to—and maybe some you can't. . . ."

The Third Wednesday in March finally came—warm and bright and slushy.

Mrs. Annis had put on her good black skirt, a white silk blouse, a black cloth coat, and black felt hat with a fresh white ribbon I had installed for the occasion.

"I may look like all furiation, but what odds does it make?" was her comment. "If folks think I look too shabbed, they can look t'other way. I be n't Town poor, yet, and I have to wear old sculch to have tax money for the Town to spend on the paupers."

Autos, bobsleds, cutters, wagons, and buggies were parked thick everywhere in the Village. Streams of villagers and countryfolk of both sexes and all ages—merchants, woodsmen, farmers' families, road-

workers, hired hands, banker, lawyer, insurance agents, milliner, dressmaker—were converging at the Town Hall. Some hustled in to secure seats. Others, chiefly candidates, stood on the porch and in the yard, talking and electioneering.

Several women pounced upon Mrs. Annis. "How do you stand on the issues, Almina? Be you for buying a snowplow? Do you favor Job Colby for re-election?"

"Ummm," she crooned. Her black eyes sparkled. "I apperhend I be on the popular side, in each case." Then she surprised even me by adding, "I—be—for—both."

"For the snowplow purchase!" shrilled the woman. "And you the second highest tax-payer in the whole Town!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Annis. "I favor the purchase. I don't admire waiting days to have my road plowed for the mailman to get through—and other comers and goers."

All the way to the front of the Hall—to favor her somewhat dull hearing—Mrs. Annis was buttonholed and quizzed on the snowplow measure, and she left buzzing tongues and bulging eyes in her wake.

On the rostrum, the three Selectmen and other Town officials were assembled, full of bustling importance they could not completely camouflage.

At ten sharp, Moderator Ben Stevens rapped for order. The High School music teacher played the piano accompaniment for America. Then the young Baptist minister delivered the invocation. Reports from the Selectmen and various officials followed. The Chairman of the Committee on the Town Poor, the young High School principal, read "an ideal weekly expenditure for a family of four," which listed toilet paper.

"Toilet paper for Town paupers!" Mrs. Annis murmured. "Us old-timers made corn-cobs suffice!"

"Jump up and argue for corn-cobs!" I scribbled on my pad.

## NEW ENGLAND TOWN MEETING

She chuckled. "It'd be town talk I were too stingy to outfit the paupers with necessities. So, if none other objects, the paupers'll have paper same as their betters, though they'd advantage themselves buying food with the money."

At noon, all reports having been read and accepted, everyone filed downstairs to the dining-room. Long tables were heaped with food, among them that popular, time-honored New Hampshire dish, "red-flannel hash."

The Meeting reconvened at one, and new business was in order.

First came the hiring of school bus drivers. Before a vote could be taken, an unshaven tousled man in rough backwoods clothing was on his feet. Upon being recognized by the Moderator, he thundered: "I demand to know how many of these bus drivers be carrying liability insurance. I know the Town don't provide it. But that be no excuse. I know the law, if others doesn't. I wunt leave my younguns ride another year unpertected by insurance. Why, way it be now, every time them younguns climb aboard a school bus they take their lives in their hands! If they be harmed, who's to be sued for damages? These drivers be too Job's-turkey poor to make suing them worth while."

The Moderator rapped for silence. Each candidate was asked to state his insurance status, and we learned that Mrs. Sawtell, the woman driver up for re-election was the only one carrying it. A motion was made that the matter be left to the drivers. But a counter-motion carried, and it was "Voted that each school bus driver in the Town must secure liability insurance within two weeks." There was muttering in my vicinity as to whether the local insurance agent had or had not "engineered the whole upscuddle."

The subject of shelters on country roads for waiting school children was then

warmly agitated but failed to win sufficient support to carry. Mrs. Annis whispered, "I can't get het up over that. Us little tots walked to school in all weathers instead of riding at Town expense the way they do now."

The snowplow issue was finally brought up by a Selectman, and many eyes focused on Mrs. Annis. He compared the cost of renting with that of owning. According to his figures, the interest on the money required to purchase a plow would more than pay for the rental of one.

The backwoodsman who had won on the liability-insurance issue got the floor. "I be agin the purchase. It'd be a waste of taxpayers' money. We can't use a snowplow over half the year and sometimes we don't need one for weeks on end in the winter. And I misdoubt me if Job Colby kin keep a snowplow in repair and running as it ought."

"He needn't worry about taxpayers' money," murmured Mrs. Annis. "He only pays five dollars. . . . Well, here I go." She stood up, tall and ready.

All craned their heads and stared at her. "Mrs. Annis has the floor," the Moderator said.

"Far back as my memory goes," she began, "all the men in a neighborhood got out their oxen when it blizzarded, and kept the roads open for school children, doctor, and other important wayfarers, including farmers who must get to town with milk and other produce needed daily in Boston and other cities whatever the weather. The oxen were treated to apples and the men to cider at every farmhouse they plowed past. So they didn't consider a blizzard a hardship." There was appreciative tittering.

"The men didn't have to wait to borrow their equipment. They owned it and furnished it and their work free, for the good of the community. Father always said, 'It be cheaper in the long run to

## COMMON GROUND

own than to rent.' Then you can have a thing when you need to use it, 'stead of waiting around and losing time—and time be money—for the lender to be ready to loan it. Morebetoken, you be n't helping the other to have what you lack yourself, and you take better care of your own things because it costs you to replace them. I have faith that Job Colby can and will keep the snowplow that we buy in good condition, and all of us knows he be expert in using one already.

"It was wanting their own things—land, business, religion, laws, freedom, room, opportunity—that planted our forebears in this country and built it up."

Her cheeks were flushed and her black eyes sparkling.

"Owning our own tools is the way we do things. We be n't going to grow soft and timid and careless now and lose our independence, I apperhend. I move that the Moderator appoint a committee to purchase the best up-to-date snowplow on the market."

The applause jingled the windows and electric light fixtures. The motion passed unanimously.

Some opposition persisted against Job Colby, but he was re-elected on the third ballot to Mrs. Annis' delight.

Those living in the far reaches of the Town area began departing before the Meeting adjourned, to be home by chore time. But we stayed until the Methodist

preacher pronounced the benediction and the Moderator closed the Meeting.

A Selectman laughingly told Mrs. Annis, "Your mention of apples and cider was what clinched the plow question." But several women patted her shoulder. "All you said hit the nail on the head, Almina."

Job Colby, red-faced and awkward, came up to us. "They tell me as I've you two women to thank for being re'lected. That poem in the paper and that little recommend in that grand speech recruited the votes for me, they say."

"Mrs. Annis suggested the poem," I told him. "But I didn't realize the electioneering back of her idea."

Home again, Mrs. Annis remained flushed and sparkling.

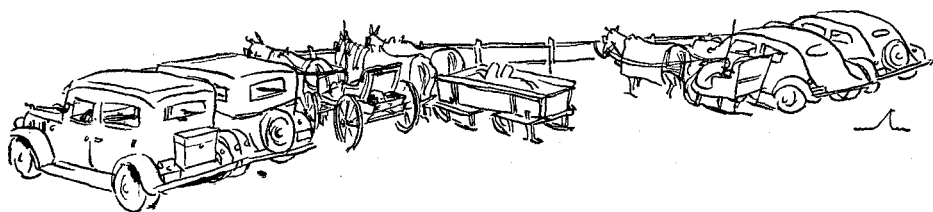
"What project will you put over next Town Meeting?" I asked.

"Ummm," she said. "It be tough on pupils to stand waiting for a bus in all weather. We always walked and kept warm. I feel rather hangdog the shelters wa'n't voted in. Guess I'll back that, next March."

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*Born in Minnesota of Quaker stock, Harriette Wilburr is now a California resident.*

*The sketches are by Bernardine Custer.*





# MERRY-GO-ROUND

LANGSTON HUGHES

COLORED CHILD AT CARNIVAL:

Where is the Jim Crow section  
On this merry-go-round,  
Mister, cause I want to ride?  
Down South where I come from  
White and colored  
Can't sit side by side.  
Down South on the train  
There's a Jim Crow car.  
On the bus we're put in the back—  
But there ain't no back  
To a merry-go-round!  
Where's the horse  
For a kid that's black?

## A WHITE FOLKS' WAR?

ROI OTTLEY

THIS is war time," a letter to the editor of Harlem's Amsterdam-Star News ran, "but I must remind our Negro leaders that they are making the same mistake now that they have made so often in the past—falling all over themselves to register loyalty to America in this crisis without finding out whether the black race is going to benefit by it [the war] or not.

"That does not mean lineup with a foreign country, but it does mean, since we have been treated so badly after all previous wars, that we should be assured now that this condition will be remedied. It is all right to be loyal if it is encouraged. But I fail to see where America is doing anything to encourage the loyalty of black men. . . .

"Remember, that which you fail to get now you won't get after the war."

The issue of the paper that published this comment contained twenty articles by staff writers which dealt critically with the treatment of Negroes. On January 10, sixty prominent Negroes met in New York City in a conference called by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League to consider the Negro's part in the war effort. The group passed with only five dissenting votes a resolution introduced by Judge William H. Hastie, civilian aide to the Secretary of War, that "the colored people are not wholeheartedly and unreservedly all out in support of the present war effort." Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, attributed this countrywide apathy

of Negroes to discrimination in the Army, Navy, and Air Corps, and especially in the defense industries.

This reflection of Negro thinking on the present crisis has its roots in the immediate past. When the First World War involved the United States, Negroes sought at once to participate as soldiers. With full consciousness of their duties as citizens and with the desire to act the roles of men, they gladly bore their share of the war effort. W. E. B. Du Bois, then the acknowledged leader of the Negro community, articulated the race's view toward the conflict in his now famous "Close Ranks" statement to the nation as well as to certain Negroes:

"We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all dark races for equality, freedom, and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, *forget our special grievances* and close ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow-citizens and the allied nations who are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills."

This statement stirred Negroes in 1918. It would rally Negroes today—if there were only assurances. But a Negro leader would not dare call upon the race "to forget its special grievances" if he hoped ever to continue his influence. (There were Negroes even in 1918, like A. Philip Randolph, who rained criticisms on Du Bois



## A WHITE FOLKS' WAR?

for his statement.) For in the last war, in spite of the acknowledged bravery of the Negro troops, they suffered all forms of Jim Crow, humiliation, discrimination, and indeed slander—a pattern being followed today. And while this occurred with the A.E.F. abroad, the Negro civil population at home was the victim of the bloodiest race riots in American history. The most shocking were the East St. Louis, Illinois, disorders, in which white people drove thousands of Negroes from their homes and put to death more than two hundred by shooting, burning, and hanging. There were demonstrations by Negroes all over the country; in New York fifteen thousand marched down Fifth Avenue in a "Silent Protest Parade."

Immediately after the close of the war, Administration leaders began a campaign to persuade Negroes that in spite of their full participation in the armed forces they could expect no great change in their traditional status in America. Newton D. Baker was particularly vocal on this point.

Thwarted and disillusioned, a wave of race-consciousness, which is still a compelling force, engulfed the Negro community. It began with the movement of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which explored the fascinating abstraction of an African Utopia as a homeland for the black man. It was, in fact, a Back-to-Africa movement, led by Marcus Garvey, the first of the Harlem messiahs. Its slogan, "Africa for Africans," stirred two million Negroes in the country to wild enthusiasm. A cardinal tenet of the organization was unity with all darker peoples of the world—in Africa, India, China, South America, and Japan.

When the Back-to-Africa movement collapsed, it left a residue of fierce race- and color-consciousness which has propelled many a Negro movement since. Stimulated as they were, many Negroes turned to Japan as the messianic race and

the hope of the darker peoples of the world. They traveled in Japan on Japanese grants and subsidies; and others in Washington, Pittsburgh, and New York entertained Japanese. As late as 1941, debates were held in which the Chinese-Japanese war was the subject, with Japanese spokesmen presenting their side of the conflict.

When Japan declared war on the United States, Harlem's Nipponese visitors disappeared, but not altogether the effects of their propaganda in Negro life. To be sure, Negroes to a man are outraged by the treacherous assault upon their country—not having digested Japanese propaganda whole cloth—but the significant result of Japanese infiltration into the Negro community is that Negroes bear no prejudice against the Japanese people. And largely because the "yellow Aryans" drew no color line. But the unhappy leadership of their war lords is regarded in Negro circles as a betrayal of the darker peoples.

However, since the present war began, the utterances of the Negro press and pulpit have not reached the crescendo of denunciation that has characterized those of white circles. A survey of leading Negro newspapers throughout the country, since December 7th, reveals no letters-to-the-editor commenting on Japanese treachery, a fact which might suggest that many Negroes have been neutralized.

Little speculation is needed, however, to show that Negroes, while eschewing comment on Japanese aggression, are vitally concerned with the ultimate meanings of the war. Roy Wilkins, editor of *The Crisis* magazine, organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example, warns Negroes to watch the Anglo-Saxon and Union Now movements for the possible future cast of the world. He speaks of them as "sections of a larger concept."

## COMMON GROUND

Less restrained in language is the Negro man-in-the-street. "Colored people in the United States," one comments, "should rise up as one man and smash this most damnable conspiracy [Union Now] against the darker races."

These attitudes are underscored by a grave suspicion. The very term "Anglo-Saxon" inspires little confidence in darker peoples. Many Negroes point out that Union Now, for instance, has not declared itself on minority groups as yet, particularly dark minorities. And they look with suspicion on Dorothy Thompson, one of the leading champions of a coalition of Anglo-Saxon governments, for her vagueness on the black man's role in this hoped-for social order; as well as Henry Luce, editor of *Time*, *Fortune*, and *Life*, who is regarded as the spokesman for the kind of world which will be created and ordered for American imperialism—"silk-gloved, perhaps, but imperialism."

"We must not be deflected," writes Wilkins, "from vigorous protest and action against the travesties on democracy now in vogue, by emotional and oratorical appeals to us to forget, forgive, and concentrate on the larger issues." For, as he observes, the "larger issues" are inextricably bound up with (and are in fact) the detailed matters which concern the Negro daily.

Negroes see, but not with despair, the economic considerations involved in the present conflict as formidable bars to the extension of democracy. "It must be clearly recognized," writes Du Bois today, "that the main hindrance to such a [democratic world] movement is the more or less conscious feeling among white people of the world that other folk exist not for themselves but for their uses to Europe; that white Europe and America have the right to invade the territory of colored peoples, to force them to work, and to interfere at will with their cultural

patterns, while demanding for whites themselves a preferred status."

To capital, he holds, colored labor means low wages, cheap raw materials, and high profits. "The strong motive of private profit," Du Bois argues, "is thus placed in the foreground of interracial relations, while the greater objects of cultural understanding and moral uplift lurk in the background." Here in the United States, and to a degree in England, curbs have been placed on industry limiting profits in the interests of the laboring masses. But in colonies and quasi-colonial areas, according to Du Bois, the imperialist nations are tending to repeat and perpetuate the errors of the worst days of capitalist exploitation.

The maintenance of a capitalistic colonial economy, it is pointed out frequently by Negroes, frustrates and nullifies much of the reform effort within progressive countries which own or control colonies. Obviously acquisition of colonies by the United States will retard the economic advancement of white labor as well as Negro. It will mean further debasement of subject peoples, by restricting their initiative, by ruining their culture and substituting no adequate cultural patterns.

As yet, no tangible plan has been advanced which will serve to evolve the best civilization for the largest number of human beings after the war. Hence many thinking Negroes are on the verge of developing a dangerous cynicism that will certainly trickle down to the Negro masses. Despite the high-minded talk of bringing the "four freedoms" to the world, Negroes often suspect there is a tacit understanding among the leaders of the white allied nations to limit democracy to white men only.

Observations of this character are suggested by such actions as the demand of the British Government that the United States send no American Negroes to work

## A WHITE FOLKS' WAR?

on the West Indian defense bases. And, what is more important, the fact that the Administration quietly acquiesced. Nor are feelings of this sort dispelled by revelations of wage differentials on defense projects. Recently Congressman Vito Marcantonio called attention specifically to the conditions existing at Borinquen Field in Puerto Rico, where skilled white workers receive \$1.50 per hour and native skilled workers, 40 cents per hour; where white helpers receive 75 cents an hour and native helpers only 25 cents an hour. Similar discriminatory practices are reported in force in Jamaica, Trinidad, Bermuda, St. Lucia, Antigua, British Guiana, and the Bahamas.

Such reports are hardly reassuring to darker peoples, who, in spite of inadequate communication, are developing a broad unity because of common oppression by imperialist nations. Today the "vox pop" columns of the Negro press, faithful reflections of Negro mass thought, are brimful of anxious, some inflammatory, calls for unity among Negroes to meet the present crisis as it affects the darker peoples—excluding Japan of course. "As terrific as the war is in its impact upon America," a typical letter said, "*it will not wipe out race prejudice nor alter greatly the American mind.* . . . For the duration of the war, we beseech our people to suspend intra-racial bickering. This is the time for decisive action, but we cannot arrive at correct decisions nor can we formulate any effective action while there is strife among us."

And so today, Negroes are determined and will not be easily placated. For the black man, like all oppressed peoples, has

a long memory. Certainly W. E. B. Du Bois' widely-read autobiography, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), will provide a constant reminder of the unhappy experiences of the First World War. "I am less sure now than then of the soundness of [my] war attitude," he confesses today. "I did not realize the full horror of war and its wide impotence as a method of social reform. . . . I doubt if the triumph of Germany in 1918 could have had worse results than the triumph of the Allies. Possibly passive resistance of my twelve millions to any war activity might have saved the world for black and white. . . ."

All that has been said here, of course, places the United States in a rather paradoxical position. But too long have its white people been apathetic to the clamorings for democracy of 13 million citizens, a group larger than entire nations involved in the present global conflict. Too few voices have been heard in protest against this undemocratic denial. Lillian Hellman, speaking through one of her Negro characters in the play, *The Little Foxes*, labels this tragic silence as a question of ethics:

"There are people who eat the earth and eat all the people on it," she says. . . . "Then, there are people who stand around and watch them eat it. Sometimes I think it ain't right to stand and watch them do it."

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## EAR PLAYERS

WHEN you play music by ear, it don't mean you wiggle your ears while you're playing it. You just use your ears to remember what you hear. You sort of write down a bunch of sounds somewhere in your head and save them for future use. Sometimes you hear a tune and catch some of the words, and for a long time you go around with it roaring through your head like a lost steamboat.

My mother was an ear musician. She lived seven miles out of the little county seat, Okemah, Oklahoma. Songs meant a lot to her and she collected hundreds of them in her head, and she chorded on the piano and sung tales and stories that taught me the history of our section of the country, its weather, cyclones, pretty women, love affairs, outlaws, disasters, and hopes for the better world that's coming.

I'd lay on the floor with my chin in my hands and soak up every drop. Then, when she'd quit singing, I'd jump up and run out of the house, down through the henlot, climb the high rusty fence, and chase out into the timber on the creek bottom to listen to the words and tunes trickle through my mind, and vision a thousand reels of moving pictures—outlaws, fugitives, and dead-shot pioneer women, cowboys, Indians, horse thieves, floods, and a million other things. There was the ballad about the Sherman Cyclone:

*You could see the storm approaching,  
The cloud looked death-like black,  
And through our little city  
It left a dreadful track. . . .*

## WOODY GUTHRIE

And I recollect the western version of the old song, Blackjack Davey:

*'Twas late last night when my lord come home  
Inquiring for his lady,  
And the only answer that he got,  
She's gone with the Blackjack Davey,  
She's gone with the Blackjack Dave. . . .*

Off he went on his buckskin mare, his hundred-dollar saddle, and chased her down. But she stuck to her guns and she told him:

*Yes, I've give up your diamond rings,  
Your butlers and your ladies;  
And I've give up your feathery bed  
To ride with the Blackjack Davey,  
And sing with the Blackjack Dave. . . .*

*When he got home to his money bags,  
To his butler and his lady,  
The tears come a-trickling down his face  
When he thought of the Blackjack Davey,  
And the song of the Blackjack Dave.*

I'm not a history expert; the story and the tune of this old song might be tracked back to King Somebody VIII, the dark ages, or plumb back to old King Tut. But the main thing is that the people of the past have used songs to speak their mind, have their fun, do their courting and make their work easier.

I recall that my eighth year in school a mighty good thing happened to me. There was a little Negro shine boy that worked in a barber-shop on my road to school.

## EAR PLAYERS

I walked in to get the shears put to me and clumb up in the chair and sat down. Some years before, Jinks, the barber had fought me to a standstill, hogtied and hobbled me, and give me my first haircut. He'd clipped me ever since. But he'd played a whole raft of mean jokes on me, and I hated him in a way. He'd told me some awful funny things, and I liked him in a way. He always pulled some kind of a wisecrack when a customer got in his chair, and this time he told me, "Well, you know, this is sort of a special sales day, and we're not giving any kind of hair cuts except bald-headed ones. . . ."

I asked him what he meant. And he said, "That's the only kind we got left . . . makes you bald-headed. Wouldn't you like to be bald-headed for a while?"

I jumped out of his chair and hollered back at him, "No, I don't! I just want a hair cut. Common everyday one. That's all. I'm gonna tell my dad on you, and he'll come up here and go through this old place like a steam engine!"

Jinks kidded me out of my hot-headed spell and got me back up in the chair. As he went to pull the lever on the side and adjust it to the right pitch and slant, I caught my finger in a hinge and it felt like my arm was being pulled off. I yelled bloody murder, but I couldn't get loose. Jinks didn't know what was the matter. He thought maybe I was fooling him again, and he just reared back and laughed. But when he looked down and saw the blood running onto the floor, he threw the chair back into a position that turned the finger loose, and it was mashed flat and white, red and dripping. I held it in my hand and wouldn't let anybody see it.

Nobody in the room could quiet me down. The more I squalled, the louder I got. I disturbed everybody in that end of town, except one person.

That was the Negro shoe shine boy.

He was laying outside in the sun on an old whittled-up bench that had the history of the Oklahoma land rush carved in it, if you could figure out the code. He was all raggedy, in old baggy overalls. He was blowing a long, lonesome blues on the harmonica.

With tears running down my face like water, I held my hand back so that Jinks and my dad, who had come on the run from the pool hall where he was shooting a game of snooker, could get a look at the finger. They said it was broke, and I'd have to go to a doctor.

But just setting there listening to that easy-riding music coming in at the old screen door and watching the shine boy through the big plate glass, I held my mashed hand in my shirt and told Jinks to go ahead and cut my hair. . . . I'd run to the doctor just as quick as it was trimmed.

I marched out like a wounded soldier back from the front lines, with a fresh hair cut, some red loud-smelling tonic squirted on me for good measure—and I stopped at the old bench and just stood there listening to the music.

When the Negro boy looked up, I said, "That sounds awful good to me. . . . Guess the reason is 'cause I got to go to the doctor."

"Shucks, you ain't so bad off," he said. "I been to the doctor three or four times. Been to him about everything. . . . You'll be all right."

"What's the name of that piece you're blowing on there?" I asked him. I could see his mouth harp was almost as old as he was; it had fell apart and been wired back on both ends.

"That's called Raincrow," he told me. And then he sucked the low notes down, choking the tone in the palms of his hands, and played it again.

"Raincrow? What's a Raincrow?" I asked.

## COMMON GROUND

"Don't you know what a Raincrow is? That's a big bird that gets out in the timber and hollers when it's going to rain. Then he hollers while it's raining. Then he hollers after it quits."

I shook my head up and down and said, "Boy, them birds just about holler all of the time, don't they?"

"That's the way Raincrow does. Three different ways of hollering. One like this, when it's just clouding up, looking like wet weather—" And he cupped his hands over the mouth organ and strained the lower bass notes in, just such a way that the soft sound that come out had a faraway sad call, reminding me of the turtle doves that cooed on the hillsides; but there was a little difference, and of course I knew that was the Raincrow waiting for it to rain.

"And when it commences to rain, that's when Raincrow hollers something like this—" And he blew again, and I could feel the chilly wind in the underbrush and feel the water soaking through my clothes.

When he had blown the last call, I could tell, without stretching the almanac, that the weather had cleared up, everybody's clothes would dry out, the leaves in the forest would smell sweet and clean.

"That's how Raincrow sounds," he said. "That's the only way Raincrow knows how to holler. I heard him holler down in Louisiana. But you ain't got no Raincrow up here in Oklahoma. I'm just telling you how Raincrow goes, so you'll know a little bit about Louisiana."

In the months that followed, there were a few breaks in my school attendance. Days I didn't even show up for books. But I knew exactly where I was all the time. I even knew why. But when my dad and the teacher asked me about the days my desk was vacant, I didn't know what to say.

I saved nickels, dimes, sold bottles, toe

sacks, missed a lunch or two, and bought me a harmonica. It was pretty well worn out when my folks really found I was learning to play the Raincrow so I'd know about Louisiana. I can still see a picture of the sunny afternoons when I would set out on the heavy platform back of the Creek Trading Company, a grocery store next door to Jinks' barber shop, and play alongside George, the shine boy. I remember his blowing the Fox and the Hounds, calling up all of the long-eared hounds, getting ready for a big fast-running coon hunt. George even had all of them named, and you could hear them one by one, answering the call of the hunting horn: old Coaley—he's coal black; Blue—he bays the loudest at a 'possum but the longest at a coon; then Shep, barks a lot but ain't no good for nothin'; Trixie, she dives right in; and there's old Dollar falling in—he gets on a hot scent and he squalls and he bawls; and it's here they go, down and gone—'cross the creek with a spike collar on—

It was a pretty empty-looking town when George lost his job at the shop. But I played his songs, and they made me walk slow and think about things. His family moved away somewhere and I never run across him again.

I got to be a Freshman in high school, even took up typing, and many a day I'd set in front of the typewriter and wish I had something to write about. My harmonica would be in my shirt pocket, and I knew I couldn't play it in class; so I'd just sort of sneak it out real easy, cup it in my hands, and look out across the willow grove at the bottom of the hill.

When they threwed the oil field open, lots of jobs sprung up with good wages; and the pool halls, road houses, and hotel lobbies filled up with hard-working men and women of all colors—pushing and shoving, wheeling and dealing, trying to



## EAR PLAYERS

make a living. Traveling musicians hit town, made the rounds, and rambled on down the road. As fast as they'd light on the streets, I'd locate them and park myself on a car fender close by and listen to them play.

Ear Players, folks called them, because they picked up their music and singing without reading the notes, and learnt more and more songs everywhere they went: fiddlers that made their violins out of old oil cans, trick bow fiddlers, blues and religious players that begged for nickels up and down the street. Preachers talked on hell fire and damnation and played music for their tips. Blind and crippled people rattled old tin cups. War veterans played mouth organs through shrapnel holes in their throats. Negroes blew the railroad blues with their nose. Indians chanted up and down the curb. Ballad singers of all kinds and colors hit the oil towns . . . and there was very little of their kind of singing that I didn't soak up.

Oklahoma dirt-farmers, on Saturdays, jammed the streets, talking high prices, low prices, politics, and religion. They only kept quiet when there was a good musician going. They gathered around in big herds, chewing tobacco, sharpening long keen pocket knives, rolling the makings, and listening. The population of that county run about one-third Negro, one-third Indian, and one-third white. I saw how the music of one color was also the music of the other.

There was a tall slim driller that lived with his new wife in a box-board house at the bottom of the schoolhouse hill, paying \$5 to \$7 a week for a place that didn't cost \$100. Our bunch of kids had built us a gang hut on the south side of the hill, and one day, while passing his little house, we heard the booming of a big guitar and a song about the fastest race horse that ever run.

Stewbally.

We went inside and sat around on the floor. He loved to sing for us. On his days off we kept him busy from he could till he couldn't:

*Stewbally was a good horse, he held a  
high head;  
And the mane on his foretop was fine as  
silk thread;  
I rode him in England, I rode him in  
Spain;  
I never did lose, boys, I always did gain.*

Hard luck hit our family and it scattered apart.

At 14, I first hit the road and followed it down to the Gulf coast. The country was booming with real-estate deals, and a family of my friends had moved in down there to get started on a truck farm.

On the road I found I was a stranger everywhere and to everybody. Because you're just a kid, only 14, people ask you, Ain't you afraid of this? Ain't you afraid of that? Wouldn't I like a job to earn my room and board?

I remember a tall gangling guy that run a little gossiping barber shop in a little town. I felt like I was more at home with barbers than anybody, because I'd learned to listen to their haywire jokes and knew when to laugh. But I'd learned awful quick, too, just the right minute to pull out my harmonica and start blowing the blues—and with this particular barber it worked pretty good.

He handed me a dime. I played the chorus of an old Pentecost song: "I got a home in that rock, can't you see?" and he sung the words. Two other barbers, hearing the music, come a-running out of a door in the rear of the shop, cheap whiskey strong on their breath, and crowded around the barber and me. The whole bunch hit their parts and reeled from side to side singing:

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I got a home in that rock, can't you see;  
I got a home in that rock, can't you see;  
I got a home in that rock, just beyond  
the mountain top;  
And it's that Old Rock of Ages, can't  
you see?

God gave Noahy the rainbow sign, can't  
you see;

God gave Noahy the rainbow sign, can't  
you see;

God gave Noahy the rainbow sign;

Won't be water but fire next time;

It's that Old Rock of Ages, can't you see?

And there in the sweat of that hot summer's day, I learned that nickels and dimes could be made by finding people that are hungry for their own kind of music, and making a swap.

It was easy for me to catch rides. One truck driver told me, "I pick up free riders by their weight; if they weigh more'n I do, they walk." When I caught him looking the other way, I sneaked my mouth organ out of my shirt pocket and laid my head back on the seat and tried to make my music heard above the roar of the motor. For a long time I lost out. Then, "Mule Skinner Blues?" he hollered at me.

"Yes, sir—" I said. "Something like that. . . . I just learnt it the other day . . . practicin' up on it a little. . . ." I was stalling just a shade because there's thousands of blues sung to the same tune.

"That ain't my favorite blues, though," he yelled above the noises of the truck. "I like that there Black Snake Moan—that's my picks."

I didn't say anything because I'd never heard tell of the Black Snake Moan. I felt like I'd lost a hand at poker, and leaned my head back again, watching the fence posts whiz past, and by force of habit, without really paying much attention, I kept on blowing the same old blues tune

over and over. And he rocked his head and sang in his nose:

Hey, hey, Woman, got a black snake  
crawling in my room;

Hey, hey, Woman, got a black snake  
crawling in my room;

Better bring your daddy a broomstick,  
Mama,

Help me get rid of this black snake  
soon! . . .

And when he shot on his brakes and I got out the door, he said, "Look, kid—I don't know where you're goin', see, but you look too damn young to be out hittin' the skids. But I guess you know your own business. Here. . . ." And he dropped a heavy silver dollar into the palm of my hand. "This old road, kid, she's rougher'n a cob," he said, and wheeled down a side road full of chug holes.

The family of friends couldn't believe their eyes when I walked up on their front porch. I'd mailed them a letter I was on my way. Mrs. Mosely opened the door and her eyes run out on long stems. She hollered, "Why, Woody, you crazy little rascal! Get in this house! Bud! Pete! Here's Woody! It's really him! He wasn't kidding! He really did come, all the way from Okemah to Algoa. You're just crazy in the head, you little idiot, but you're gonna stay right here and live with us! You ain't gonna get out on that road and traipse around like a wild man!"

Bud and Pete sounded good to me. I was born and raised up with them. There are photos of all three of us in our diapers standing on top of the Mosely cellar, years ago, back in Okemah.

Bud could chord on a banjo and Pete carried a rusty Jew's harp. So, before very long, our talking settled down to a few words between a lot of old songs we'd always known.

"Can you hoe figs?" Mrs. Mosely asked.



## EAR PLAYERS

"I can hoe anything that can be hoed," I told her. She'd been more of my mother than any other woman I could remember, when my own family busted up.

"Fine. You'll make a good hand. Won't make much more than your mush and coffee; but you can live right here with us. I'm just not gonna even think about seein' you walk out down that road again, young squirt. Road's no place for a boy like you. . . ."

Bud cut in and said, "Say, tell you what. We got to make music for an ice cream freezin' tonight over at Schultz's farm. We'll all go over as a band, huh—what say?"

After a big supper of crackling corn bread and peppery pinto beans, cooked with a hunk of sow belly, we took off—Bud, Pete, and myself all washed and cleaned up, sporting one of Bud's shirts; cutting across back lots and fields, over a barbed-wire fence, and down the cool dirt road that took us to the Schultzes.

Everybody was in friendly spirits when we walked into the party.

"This guy's name's Woody. Just blowed in from my old home town in Oklahoma—kind of a foreigner but a good guy at heart—and, besides, he pays his way—plays music—mouth organ," Bud said when he put me in touch with the youngest of the Schultzes. She was friendly and as full of pep as one little girl could be. I felt like I had lived right in that neighborhood for twenty years.

"What's your name again?" I asked. "I guess I forgot it. . . ."

"Dorothy," she said. "That's all—just plain old Dorothy. You can remember that, can't you?" It had been a long time since I'd seen a face this friendly. It made a man want to get to thinking about settling down.

Bud got his banjo tuned up, I blew a note on the harmonica, and Bud nodded his head. "Okay. She's tuned up."

Pete never was a singer, but he was the loudest lung in the house, so you heard him above everybody and everything else on the Gulf that night: "Name of this here little piece, folks, is 'Short-enin' Bread'":

*Four little sisters form a ring,  
Now they break, and now they swing.  
Boys join hands in the middle of the floor,  
Hug them gals, and on you go!*

*Birdie in the cage, and that won't do;  
Cage broke down and the bird flew through;  
Join hands and circle to the right,  
Grab your partner and swing all night! . . .*

*Circle four, and on you go;  
Chicken in the bread-pan peckin' out dough;  
Do Se Do, in the middle of the floor;  
May be the last time, I don't know!*

*Girls you wait, and the boys get straight,  
Swing your partner like swinging on a gate;  
Meet your love with a big hand-shake;  
All go east on a west-bound freight!*

My head was in a condition I won't try to describe. I wanted to stay out on the Schultz farm—I wanted to live this kind of a life all my life. To know some people real well, to know what they wanted and what they done to make a living—a million things about them. When we got a fifteen-minute rest period, I found myself walking down a path that led to the cow lot, and Dorothy was listening to me. When we come to the rail fence, instead of climbing through, we clumb up on the top rail and looked out across the sleeping cows at a great shiny Texas full moon.

There is a smell, a better smell than I can write about, in heavy wavy hair—at just about this time of any night—that is, if you're situated as I was by the side of a smart young healthy girl on a

rail fence, or anywhere similar, with the wind whipping in somewhere off the salty Gulf waters—so that the fine, clean whiff of homemade dresses mixes just right with the unperfumed waves of a pretty girl's hair. . . .

I suggested we get down off the fence, inasmuch as it wasn't a suitable location for playing and singing—to which Dorothy agreed. So we found, down a little path, the flat top of a planter, where we sat while I played the harmonica and she sang—just sort of mumbling and quiet-like, but a kind of singing that convinced me the only people in this world that know how to rest are the folks that do the hardest work.

To sample her feelings I said, "Well, the morning's a new day. Wonder where I'll be by that time. . . ."

She outsmarted me a little by just saying, cool and calm-like, "Well, I hope you find some good way of making friends everywhere you go."

"Yeah," I gulped. "But—everybody ain't as friendly as you Schultzes. How'm I gonna find some way to make friends with everybody everywhere I go?"

"Oh, I don't know. That'll be mainly up to you," she told me. "Just something like tonight, I guess—maybe by playing music—you can't ever tell. I've got a sneaking feeling you're going to just ramble and ramble and keep rambling—and you won't have time to make friends in a slow way, like most folks do; you'll have to find out some kind of a fast way—like tonight—music and singing."

Dorothy was a dozen times smarter than I was that night. . . .

I got a few little jobs—helping a water-well driller, hoeing figs, irrigating strawberries in the sandy land, laying roofs, hustling sign jobs with a painter—and then found myself headed back north from the Gulf coast country again.

I followed the new oil towns and found myself as far west as Hobbs, New Mexico. I'd learned how to play a guitar, a few of the easy chords, and was making saloons like a preacher changing from street corner to street corner. I slept in jails when my kitty didn't do so good, and in cheap hotels whenever I had money. I made everything and nothing: from one cent to fifty-four dollars one single night.

I hit Pampa in the Panhandle of Texas, and stuck there a while. Then the dust storms begun blowing blacker and meaner, and the rain was getting less, and the dust more and more. I made up a little song that went:

'37 was a dusty year,  
And I says, Woman, I'm a leavin' here.

And on one dark and dusty day, I pulled out down the road that led to California, vigilantes, citizens groups, deputy thugs, and mean harness bulls.

The hot days on the highway made you sweat, and you could lay down on the desert at the side of the road and take a little snooze; but the only place, outside of saloons, where you could get in out of the weather at night was the filling stations. And in pretty near every one you saw a big sign jumping out in your face: "Don't Loaf Here, Hitch-Hiker." And the boss or station-hand would say, "Sorry, bud, have to ask you to move on. . . . If we let one guy hang out around here, we'd have to do the same thing for all of them—and God knows there's a flat million of you coming from somewhere." So I'd hit the wind again.

There was warmer-hearted ones, though—in some of the smaller stations the big companies didn't own yet. One was a salvage yard with a little dim light batting like a butterfly's wings, a home-made air-pressure motor whanging away, and a

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skinny man that didn't seem to care if you come, went, or stayed. I ducked in at the door and sidled up to the heater. He waited about five minutes, then asked me, "Play that music box, son?"

I told him yes, when my hands was thawed out to where I could wiggle my fingers.

"'Bouts ye from?" He kept looking out the window for some unexpected customer to come along and help him pay his bills.

"Oklahoma."

"Part?"

"Eastern," I told him.

"Town?"

"Okemah—Okfuskee County." I wondered if he'd know what I was talking about. Oklahoma is full of Indian names. Hard to pronounce.

"Creek Indian Nation."

"That's right—big oil country," I said, surprised.

"You mean it used to be. Hell, they shut that field down ten years ago—pumpin' now—that's all, an' pumpin' don't take no work hands. One big field engine and a string of cables running around'll pump a whole half a county, an' just one or two men to keep the engine runnin' an' the cables greased. I know that oil-field work from start to finish. . . . Go ahead, knock off a tune on that box."

"Which tune?" I said.

"They's an old song that goes somethin' like this. Never did know but one line of it—" And he coughed, snorted, heaved his lungs and throat clear, and sung in a high, rattly voice.

*Outttt on an Injun reser-vation;*

*Far awayyyy from civi-li-zation—*

*Wherrrrrr—wherrrrr—*

*Wherrrr the foot of a white man sel-dommmmm trod;*

He looked up at me, then into the fire, and run through his mind for the next

lines, but he couldn't catch them; so I sung 'em out:

*White man went to fish one summer;  
There lived an Indian girl, a hummer,  
Satin skin, like copper and bronze.*

We glanced in the corners of each other's eyes, smiling like we'd won a dollar watch at a picture-show raffle. He asked if I was hungry. I said I wasn't hungry, I was just vacant. He chuckled to his self, got up, opened his greasy candy case, and handed me a long, nickel bar. I downed it in a couple or three sticky bites. I was setting on an old packing box and started dozing, falling over to one side, waking up, and then dozing and falling again. Then he said, "Listen, sonny, I cain't set here and keep a eye peeled on you to keep you from falling into that fire. If you want to sleep, they's an old truck out here on the back side of the lot. Go out there and bed down. Use this to throw over you. . . ." And he handed me an old strip of waterproof canvas.

I held it up to the heater to warm it just a little. And he told me about a girl that had hitched in early in the night. "Overalls and jumper on. Right purty little thing. Don't know where she's from er whereabouts she's headed. Somethin' haywired back home, if you was to ask me. See loads of 'em on the roads—specially Mexican girls. They take short jumps from crop to crop. Some jump clean into California—and some's so bashful they won't even ask a feller for a ride—just walk from one crop to the next one. All ages. The one out in the truck must be right around about seventeen year old."

I cut in on him. "Ahhh—the one—where?"

"Truck. . . . Not more'n seventeen. But then you cain't tell. Told her she might have a partner in the truck tonight—cold

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night—lots of walkers on the roads. She said it was Okie dokie with her. Mighty friendly. . . .” He let his eyes go shut for a few seconds, and I was standing there wondering about life in general.

“Reck—reckon it’ll be all right—both sleep in the same truck?” I managed to ask.

“Shore it’ll be all right. Go ahead on out there an’ bed down. She’s all right. You’ll just go to bed in the back of the truck; and she’s up in the cab with both doors locked. . . .” He dozed again as I opened the door. I felt the dry cutting wind while I clumb up into the bed of the truck and pulled the hunk of canvas over me. I lay there thinking a million and one thoughts, and my eyes wouldn’t go to sleep. First thing I knew, though, it was broad daylight, with the sun just sticking its head up over the flat, squared patches of clean-smelling truck stuff. I thanked the old man, handed him his canvas, and walked down the road, trotting a little to get my blood to percolating.

In a patch of sunshine, parked on the rail of a cement bridge, I saw a girl dressed up in overalls, hair tied back with a bandana. I was within ten feet of her when she said, “Good morning.” I was out of breath for two reasons, but I said, “Pretty mornin’, ain’t it?” Then she asked me, “Where you bound for?” “To the end of this 66,” I told her, “and I don’t know where that is. . . .”

She was prettier than most of the tourists. No paint. Looked like she had good sense, too. I didn’t know whether to keep walking or stop for a visit. Then she said, “Sing me a song.” “Which one?” I asked her. “Ohhh, just your favorite. I laid awake four hours last night hoping you’d sing me a song in that old truck.” A fast-stepping sedan whiffed past us, but all we got was a cold puff of early morning wind.

“I was asleep; cain’t play when you’re asleep—” I told her.

“You’re lying, and you know it. You were not asleep!”

“What makes you think I wasn’t?”

“Well, two reasons. First place, there’s not a man or woman living that can sleep in weather like this in a truck like that,” she said, pulling out a half a pack of cigarettes, handing me one, and holding up a match for me to light up.

“You said two reasons. What’s the other?”

“Me.”

“You?”

“Yes, me. . . .”

“Me, what?”

“I was the second reason.”

Well, there wasn’t much I could add onto that. I leaned up against the big square concrete bridge post and puffed away at the smoke.

“Are you going to play me a song?”

I flipped the snipe over the railing of the bridge, pulled my old guitar around in place and started:

*Come set down beside me, my darlin’;  
Come lay your cool hand on my brow;  
Promise me that you will never—  
Be nobody’s darlin’ but mine.*

*You’re as sweet as the flowers in spring-time;*

*You’re as pure as the dew from the rose;  
Yes, I’d rather be somebody’s darlin’  
Than a poor boy that nobody knows.*

She sung all of the verses with me. Early morning music is just about the prettiest kind of music there is, but lots of folks lay in bed so long they never get to hear any of it. I decided, standing there, that women too are just about their prettiest in the early morning sun.

“Where ’bouts you from and where you headin’?” I finally asked her. She twisted her cigarette out against the rail and said back to me, “I didn’t ask you where you was from, did I?”

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I thought a minute and said, "Don't believe you did. . . . You asked me where I was headed but not where I was from."

"Well, what do you say, brother, that we just sort of let things rest just that way?" She looked me real straight in the eye. "Okay with you?"

"Okay with me," I said.

"Then let's sing some more. You know the 'Last Letter'?" She started it:

*My dear, as I write you this letter, I think  
of the past; . . .*

A fast-looking car threw on its brakes. A car-load of people, miners from up around Wickenburg or Globe, to all looks. I saw the passengers making room for more and thought how pleasant this part of my trip was going to be, playing and singing with the nice girl.

A heavy-set lady poked her head out the window and hollered, "Sorry we ain't got room for the two of you. But we hated to pass you up; you look all right to us! I don't blame you if you don't wanta split up. But if one of you wants to ride with us to Globe, hop in!"

"Hey, you—" I looked around at the girl—"get in this buggy here, and you're Globe bound! I'll wait and snag another lift."

"Don't be a nit-wit," she said in my ear. "You take this ride. You know how easy it is for me to get one! Go on! Pile in there, goof!" She was shoving me toward the door. So I fell into a place in the car by the window. She was standing there pretty as a picture, and she said, "Thanks—for the songs—"

"Shucks," I told her. "Don't thank me. I'd pile out of this car and stand right there by the side of the road and just sing the rest of my life—if—you—"

"Ever'body in? All aboard! Grab a toe holt!" The driver laughed and yelled as he took off in a big jump, running her up to 40 in second, boosting her into high,

and kicking the speedometer right on up to 65, 70, 75. . . .

"Sing us a song, pardner!" somebody shouted.

"Yeah, some good old working-folks' music! Whip 'er down!" another one yelled in my ear. So I set in with:

*I was standin' down in an Arizona town  
one day!*

*I was standin' down in an Arizona town  
one day!*

*Lord, standin' down in an Arizona town  
one day!*

*And there wasn't a woman in town that  
knew my name!*

*One thin dime was all that I had!*

*One thin dime was all that I had!*

*One thin dime was all that I had!*

*That's broke enough to make a minin'  
man feel bad!*

*Every good man gets a little hard luck  
some time!*

*Hey, hey, every good man gets a little  
hard luck some time!*

Two or three harped in with "You're tellin' me!" "Tell the truth, boy! Tell the truth!" "And the closter to Globe you git, the harder your luck!"

*Every good man gets a little hard luck  
some time;*

*Gets down and out, and he ain't got a  
dime!*

"That's me!" "That's my kind of music!" "I can see you're gonna eat your belly full on this trip, brother!"

I kept throwing verses on the fire:

*I'm goin' to Arizona where the waters  
taste like wine!*

*I'm goin' to Arizona where the waters  
taste like wine!*

"Hey! Hey!"

*I'm goin' to Arizona where the waters  
taste like wine!*

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'Cause them East Texas waters taste like  
picklin' brine!"

The small-sized lady in the front seat looked around at me and said, "You could stop off at Globe with your singing and make yourself a good piece of money. We get tired of this old sissy stuff you hear on the nickel machines!"

"Nawww, guess I'll head on for California," I told her.

"Tough country, that California, boy!"

"It ain't the country that's tough—it's them big vigilanty cops they grow out there—them native sons they call 'em!"

The hardest part of the trip was between Globe and Kingman. The further west you walk, the browner, hotter, stiller, and emptier the country gets.

There I met the hard-rock miners, old prospectors, desert rats, and whole swarms of hitch-hikers, migratory workers—squatting with their little piles of belongings in the shade of the big sign boards, out across the flat, hard-crust, gravelly desert. Kids chasing around in the blistering sun. Ladies cooking scrappy meals in sooty buckets, scouring the plates clean with sand. All waiting for some kind of a chance to get across.

I set around with everybody and sung our old songs from the dust country:

Well, I'm goin' down this road, feelin'  
bad;

Yes, I'm goin' down this road, feelin'  
bad;

I said, I'm goin' down this road feelin'  
bad;

Lord God, and I ain'ta gonna be treated  
this a way!

"Sing some more," they'd say. . . .

Well, my children need three square meals  
a day!

Yes, my children need three square meals  
a day!

My children need three square meals a  
day, Lord, God,  
And I ain'ta gonna be treated this a way!

The young folks in work pants, khaki and whipcord, slacks and cotton dresses, would gather around us and sing too. But sometimes they'd stand real quiet and listen. I knew what they was thinking about: California and the new country and the work. Born to work hard. Living without working was a pain and a torment. And to be idle was a question they couldn't answer. To be stranded out in the red-hot desert watching the slick machines, the fur coats and poodle dogs whizzing past, seeing the bottles drained of bonded whiskey thrown out along the road—pretty cars, pretty people cruising along in them—that was a question they talked about.

What kind of work, how much work—to get a car and a coat and a poodle dog like that?

We'd sing a little more:

Takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet!  
Takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet!  
Takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet,  
Lord, God!

And I ain'ta gonna be treated this a way!

'Cause your two-dollar shoes hurt my feet;  
Yes, your two-dollar shoes hurt my feet;  
Your two-dollar shoes hurt my feet, Lord,  
God!

And I ain'ta gonna be treated this a way!

A tiny old lady that looked like everybody's mama rushed out from a little jungly camp and said, "Here's a bite of lunch I put up for you. You'll need something to stick to your ribs before you make it across from here to Barstow. . . ." She handed me a greasy paper sack. I knew what was in it: some cold biscuits with salt pork between them.

I thanked her and she asked me,



## EAR PLAYERS

"How're you going to make it across, son?"

"How far is it from here to Needles?"

"Hottest part of the whole trip, boy. It's all day's hard driving in a good running car. How're you going to make it over the line? You ain't going to try to sneak across, are you? Those cops are tougher than shoe leather. . . ."

"Yeah. Heard about 'em. But—you know—we can't all stay here and live like grasshoppers on this desert," I told her. "I don't know. Don't know what I'll do, or how I'll get across. . . . Just sort of a gamble, you might say. . . ."

"You gamble, son?" Her worried eyes was asking me all kinds of questions.

"Nawww, I don't mean that kind of gamblin'—I mean gamblin' about the officers at the state line. Just gamblin' I'll run onto one that likes singin' and music. . . ."

"Well, sonny boy, I hope that you, I mean I hope that we all of us win. . . ."

I found the deputy that liked his singing and music, all right, and there's not a county in the whole state of California I've not played my guitar and sung my songs in. I gambled on officers that liked singing and cops that like people and people that like work and workers that like singing. And I've never lost a hand.

Work is the thing. The biggest and best thing you can sing about is work—songs where the very time itself is set to the rhythm of a fast whistling train, or a steamboat lost in the fog, or an air-hammer sucking wind, a horse loping home, the rattle and banging of a red-hot steel mill, or the quiet booming and chugging of a new oil field as you look out across the country.

Work is the main thing. Just learn where the work is: that's where you'll find real honest American music and songs being made up.

There's the love songs, too. But loving or being loved is a first-class job of high-class work.

You hear lots of resting songs, but you only rest so you can do your work better. You sing of things you haven't got, so you can get the things you need. You sing of the things that are wrong, so you can help to fix them.

A new worker has jumped up in the last few years—to stand alongside Paul Bunyan, John Henry, Driller Drake, Pecos Bill, and all of the world's greatest workers—Jackhammer John:

*I'm Jackhammer John, I'm a Jackhammer man;*

*Born with a Jackhammer in my hand!*

*Lord, God, I got them Jackhammer Blues!*

*I'm a Jackhammer Man from a Jackhammer town;*

*I built every port from the North Pole down; . . .*

*Hammered in the rain, hammered in the dust;*

*Hammered in the best and I hammered in the worst; . . .*

*Hammered in the mill, hammered in the mines;*

*Been in jail about a thousand times; . . .*

*Got a Jackhammer Woman, just as sweet as pie;*

*I'm gonna hammer on the hammer till the day I die!*

This kind of singing and hard traveling is my whole life, and I could write this magazine plumb full of it.

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Since hitch-hiking to New York City, Christmas 1940, Woody Guthrie has appeared frequently on CBS radio programs, made several albums of Victor Records, and toured the country with the Almanac Singers.

## STONE

MARI TOMASI

MARIA DALLI shivered in the cold wind. Her full lips tightened grimly as she studied the stonecutters gathered about the open grave of Italo Tosti. Her husband's ruddy cheeks were sunk in sorrow. He could not conceal his pain, her Pietro. He and Italo had grown up together in the old country. But it was Pietro who had come first to this Vermont granite town. It was he who had written glowing letters telling of the splendid wages in the stonesheds, who had said, "Come over to this fine country, Italo. Marry your Lucia and cross the ocean."

The black cassock flapped at the ankles of young, red-headed Father Carty. "Requiescat in pace," he intoned to the wind. He turned from the coffin, touching his hand to Lucia Tosti's in futile comfort.

So. Another paesan' stonecutter laid away. Maria breathed deeply. "Come Lucia," she ordered gently.

The widow had stopped her sobs. She was rigid now, staring at the coffin, heedless of Maria's words.

Pietro blinked his eyes and tugged at his silky mustache. "You go now, eh, Lucia?" he begged. "We will stay—the six of us—to see that everything is all right." He hesitated. Then, "Yes?" he inquired of the other five bearers.

They nodded—Gerbati the shed boss, Uey Olsen the polisher, Jose Santioz the smithy, Vitleau the sawyer, and the sad-faced Ronato, most skilled of the carvers in Granitown.

Fumbling awkwardly with his cap, Gerbati spoke. "You need not worry about a memorial, Lucia Tosti. I will give the stone, free. And Pietro and Ronato, they have agreed to carve it in their spare time." He shifted his great weight clumsily.

"You are generous, Gerbati," Lucia said.

But as Maria led her away, she spat bitterly. "Stone! Stone! The dead wear granite memorials at their heads. Dead stonecutters like my Italo wear granite in their lungs. Stonedust!" Her voice was low, tense. "Only eight years he cut stone. Only eight years to catch the sickness." Her fingers dug into Maria's arm. "You are a fool, Maria, to let Pietro stay in the sheds. Make him quit now—before you find yourself a widow with five little ones. Like me. . . . What shall I do now? I will not take charity! Shall I then turn strega, like Granitown's Josie Blaine? Shall I throw open the doors of my home to anyone who wishes to buy a glass of wine?"

"Hush," Maria murmured.

Tonight she would try again. Tonight, after having seen his closest paesan' laid in the ground from the sickness, perhaps Pietro would listen.

Maria and Pietro closed Lucia's door behind them at midnight. They knew she would sleep, fatigue and grief had so obviously conquered her flesh. Under the wavering light of the one street lamp they

walked the frozen ruts of Willow Hollow Road to Main Street. The morning's wind had spent itself. The night was still, cold. Maria's eyes lifted westward across the town to the gaunt bulk of Quarry Hill. If it were day, the shattered slope would show the vast pockmarks of its quarries, the towering gray pyramids of grout that were its wasted entrails.

Strange how the Hill dominated the town. Two-thirds of Granitown's men eked out a living, one way or another, from stone. The Hill was vindictive, merciless to the quarriers who drilled into its rock-ribbed sides; most merciless toward the stonecutters in the sheds, the men who finished the granite blocks into carved memorials. The Hill stood quiet as they gouged out its stone, yet it was not without revenge. In the end stone took its toll of all stonecutters. . . .

Now Maria saw Pietro's breath in the chill night air and heard him say, "To-

seen enough? Eight of our paesani taken in five years—Edo, Jo-Jo, Luigi, Rico, Almo, Toni, Pino. And now Italo. Ah, Pietro, quit the sheds while your chest is still free of dust!"

He was silent.

She moved her dark head toward his. "Our fourth baby, Pietro. Will this one, too, be born with a father who is a stonecutter?"

He spoke shyly, sorrowfully. "But it is foolish to give up my work now, when no other job presents itself. We must have money for you, for the new baby—"

Her patience snapped. "Four times I have heard this. With each of the other three I have heard, 'After it is born.' Promises!"

His hand sought hers. She would never understand. He liked the gray stone with its small, black, twinkling flakes, its strength under his hands. Here was ageless stone, born perhaps at the world's



morrow night we must make our grappa. We have had the wine removed from the mash these three days. If we wait much longer, age will rot it, steal the goodness—"

Her mind was not on the grappa. "Pietro," she pleaded, "have you not

birth; and here were his hands carving into it. Ah, good Dio, what a feeling! True, the great Creator gave life to man. But eventually He took away that life. And when death came, it was Pietro and other stonecutters who perpetuated that life in stone. . . . Surely the granite he

carved into beauty would not repay his love with death.

He said quietly, "It is a bad time to quit now. All those Canadians who pushed in during the strike—bakers, clerks, farmers—they cannot carve. They are not artists. Their work is plain, plain. They will ruin the stone industry. Some of us must stay—"

"Stone industry!" she cried fiercely. "Do you own it? They wanted to lower your pay, they welcomed those unskilled strikebreakers with open arms! Treated them royally, gave them police protection against you. And now you talk 'loyalty'!"

He was empty. All his excuses limped beside the real one—his love for his work. But he tried again. "I know only my trade. Granitown offers few other jobs."

"We could open a store! In our own home. In our living room! With groceries and fruit and a little bell on the door to tinkle a warning when a customer enters." Her voice lifted. "Think, Pietro, what clean, wholesome work! Selling bread that makes for life—not cutting stones for the dead. See how happy my sister Vanna is since Hugo left the sheds. They do well in their store!"

But Pietro would make no promises.

They made grappa the following evening. Pietro's short stocky figure busied itself in the kitchen, fitting out the old washboiler with copper coils. He turned the grape mash into the boiler and set it on the stove. When the first transparent drops of distilled liquor trickled from the tube, Maria packed the children off to bed in the attic bedroom, away from the alcoholic vapors that filled the lower house. The teasing piquancy irritated the nose to deep, deep breaths, and left one as giddily warmed as two long draughts of wine.

Ronato came to help. And Vanna and Hugo, passing by, decided to wait and

sample the new spirits. Vanna, glowing from the grappa vapors and the wine, boasted of their new venture, the store.

"Our happiest moments in Granitown began when the first customer walked in. Yes, Hugo?" she prompted, and her elbow nudged him sharply.

"Si, si," Hugo agreed. Dio, why must Vanna flaunt their good fortune! He saw the shadows of envy and discontent in Maria's eyes, Pietro's shrinking. He tortured his brain to interrupt the sudden silence. "Eh, Pietro," he said at last, "Ronato tells me you are carving a fine memorial!"

"The best these hands have ever cut," Pietro admitted. "Yet, if it were our Ronato's work," he supplemented humbly, "I would judge it the least of his masterpieces. It is a cross, standing just so high—smothered under an intricacy of vines. The best job I have yet undertaken, and it will be finished next week."

Maria started. *The best job . . . finished next week.* The words revolved in her mind, meaningless at first. Then her hands trembled. She remembered the day a month ago when Vitleau had been threatened with dismissal if his rheumatic hand slipped again to spoil the stone he was working on. Better still she remembered Pietro's fervid, "If by accident my hand should sometime err with the chisel, just let any boss give me hell! I would throw the job in his face and quit! Dio!"

*The best job I have yet undertaken. . . . I would throw the job in his face and quit. . . .* Maria's heart pulsed in quick hope.

"More wine," she urged and poured a brimming glass. Ronato, watching her face ripen a joyous red, murmured, "Your cheeks, Maria, are as red as the skirt you wear!"

Not until Pietro's cheeks bloomed and his words stumbled thickly one upon the

other, did Maria close the door behind her three visitors.

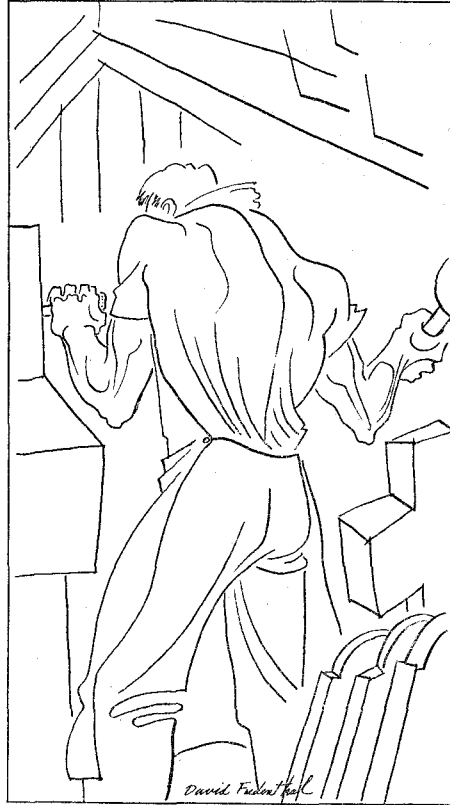
When his deep breathing bespoke a half-drugged sleep, she rose from their bed, dressed quickly, supplied herself with a flashlight and chisel, and stole from the house. This plunge into the frosty air nipped at the confidence she had enjoyed in the grappa-vaporized kitchen. A moment of indecision held her to the porch. Then her lips tightened and she stepped swiftly across the granite chip walk and ran in quiet flight down the road in the harsh moonlight.

She breathed more easily after she had crossed the bridge and tracks to the shadows of Shed Row. A darkened car was parked beneath a sprawling river willow and from its interior came a woe-ful quartet: "Show me the way to go home—" Maria gained the sheds and kept to their backyards. Under moonglow the weathered structures loomed gaunt. Strewn pieces of grout lay on the ground like whiting bones. Here and there an oblong block of granite became an overturned tombstone. Her feet pressed harshly for reality on the granite chips; each step was a sharp reminder what stone could do to flesh.

The great front doors of Gerbati's shed were strongly barred. She tried to raise one after another of the high windows but succeeded only in loosing thick showers of gray dust. A wire ripped open her thumb and she sucked at it for a moment. Then the muscles of her arms strained to aching agony and a window gave an inch. With her index finger she explored the inside sill. A bent spike was holding the window. She poked at it with the chisel until it turned in its socket.

The quartet's drunken voices drowned the creaking of the window. She climbed into the room. Gerbati's office. The flashlight grew a bright circle on the floor and revealed dust-filled cracks between

the floor boards. Even Gerbati, boss though he was, got his share of dust. A door opened into the dark wet-room, cluttered with giant saws and polishing machines. Here was the earthy chill of some subterranean cave, and, cloyed with



it, a dank smell of rust and oil that constricted her body. What was it Pietro said? The machinists hated water because it rusted their well-oiled machines . . . the carvers hated oil because it stained the granite. . . . Yet in this machine room, water had to be fed, she knew, in steady cold streams to prevent the metal saws from melting as they cut hotly into stone. If granite could thus destroy metal, how easy then to break flesh and blood. . . . Stone, the implacable. Stone, the victor. Her mouth twisted into a grim

sly smile: stone could not reason, could not plot as did her brain.

She pushed open another door, to the dry chalky air of the finishing room. Here she was blind to everything but Pietro's corner where his little masterpiece stood under a stiff covering. She pulled off the tarpaulin, studied the cross dispassionately, and set the chisel to a corner leaf design where a chip might appear a slip of Pietro's hand. She hammered, and the lofty room echoed with hollow sound. Another blow. A small edge of the cross chipped off and fell to the hard earth-packed floor. Again. The leaf pattern dwindled to half a leaf. She straightened breathlessly. Now that the deed was accomplished, its magnitude appalled her. Her heart thrashed wildly against her ribs.

For the first time since she entered the barnlike finishing room, she looked about her. A half dozen moonlit memorials stared back. On the boxing platform three little markers, ALMA, JOHN, and ALICE, accused her. She shook a fist at them and fled back to the office window, clambering out in such haste that when an outside wire caught at her skirt she tore it loose frantically, eager only to put the river once more between herself and Shed Row.

Maria Dalli never stinted a healthy sleep-appetite with worries. Night was for rest. So it was tonight. The deed was done. She crept into the house and once more beside the deeply-breathing Pietro promptly fell asleep.

But she was no longer mistress of her mind. Before the seven o'clock shed whistle could awaken her to reality, a shrill police note had called miles of blue-coated police who marched toward her from the four corners of Granitown. Hundreds of stern eyes were riveted to her hand which clutched a chisel and

hacked away at the lifeless face of the man for whom Pietro was carving a cross.

She tossed in bed, struggling to wakefulness.

"Yours is a big head, too, this morning?" asked Pietro. He sat in his night-shirt on the edge of the bed massaging his temples.

"Big head?" she murmured sleepily. Ah, the grappa vapors. The wine. She smiled ruefully. "Si, we were much too generous with the wine last night. . . ."

As soon as Pietro and his dinner pail had disappeared down Pastinetti Place, she fed the children and sent them to school. "Now he enters the shed," she thought. "He chats a moment with Ronato. . . . Now the shed whirrs with a deafening din, the men are at work. . . . He draws off the covering. He stares with unbelieving eyes. . . . Now comes Gerbati. Gerbati storms. The workmen gather around. Pietro is shamed before them. . . . 'Go to hell!' he shouts to Gerbati. 'I quit!' And he stalks away, leaves the shed forever!" She must prepare his favorite dinner: he would soon be home, dinner pail and all. He would be saddened, perplexed, enraged. He would enjoy *salsigi*, perhaps, and a fine *ensalata* of endive, tomatoes, and eggs.

The children ate the noonday meal and left again for school. No Pietro. Was he fine-combing Granitown this minute for another job. Si, that was it.

He came in shortly after four, his round face thoughtful, his head bent. He had neglected to slap the stonedust from his clothes. True, his heart must be heavy at leaving this work he loved, but she felt little sympathy. Dio, suppose an infant was attracted to red—would she not remove a red-hot poker from its reach, even though the babe screamed as if its heart were breaking? She waited patiently for his "Well, Maria, I did it. Today I quit the sheds." But he only muttered



with a preoccupied air, "The days are getting too brisk for just a kitchen fire." And in a few minutes he was in the cellar, cleaning out the furnace.

After supper when the children were abed, he shrugged into his coat, explaining briefly, "I promised to help Rossi with his grappa tonight."

Pietro is Pietro, Maria consoled herself; he will say nothing until he has found a new job. He does not want me to worry. . . .

She was alone in the kitchen darning socks when Ronato entered, his long face drawn to extreme melancholy. He hung back, ill at ease. Despite the cold evening, his brow shone with sweat. He handed her a small square of red and white checked cambric. "Last night you wore a skirt of this cloth. The skirt was whole and pretty. Last night Pietro's stone was mutilated. This morning this piece of cloth waves accusation from a wire outside Gerbati's office window. And this morning, I wager, your skirt lacks this little square." He shook his head. An artist, he could find no rhyme to this outrageous act. His lean shoulders tried to shrug off the fury in him, and he turned to leave.

Maria's fingers clenched the square until her nails, cutting into the palms, smarted her to action. Her voice was fiercely anxious. "Does Pietro know?"

He shook his head.

"Gerbati?"

"No. I chanced to be searching the yard for a flat stone. I saw the cloth—and I remembered." He finished coldly, "Don't fear—I won't tell."

Even his contempt could not stop her from gripping his arm and pleading in wild hope and despair, "What happened, Ronato? What did Gerbati say? What did Gerbati do?"

"Do? Pietro did not tell you?"

"No, no. Not one word has he spoken!"

"Nothing happened, Maria."

Her hands fell rigidly to her sides.

"Gerbati did not give him hell?" Toneless words. "Pietro did not rebel and—quit?"

Ronato's slow eyes widened. He asked gruffly, "And why should Gerbati give him hell? Anyone could see it was no accident. It was the intentional butchering of some malefactor. Gerbati respects Pietro's love for stone. He had only to see his stricken face to know he was innocent."

Her shoulders drooped. Only her black eyes were defiantly alive.

He moved uncomfortably under their blaze. Dio, to have a woman love him as Maria loved Pietro. . . .

She whirled away. Never had a *paesano* seen a tear glisten in Maria Dalli's black eyes. Nor would Ronato see one tonight.

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*A New Englander of Italian extraction, Mari Tomasi is the author of Deep Grow the Roots, voted one of the outstanding first novels of 1940. "Stone" draws on material in her forthcoming book about the Italian American workers in the stone-quarries of Vermont.*

*The illustrations are by David Fredenthal.*

## WAR COMES TO LITTLE ITALY

MICHAEL DE CAPITE

I HEARD it over the radio. And then my wife told me. Italy was at war with us. Soon the place was filled with people. It was hard to believe. You know, like someone telling a joke." He was a middle-aged druggist in New York's Little Italy on the Lower East Side.

"People were talking outside and telling the news from the windows. Had a funny feeling in my stomach. No one knew anything to say except Italy was fighting America. That was all. Well, what could you expect after the Japs, eh? It's too damn bad. A shame. But we have to fight."

I asked him about the old people.

He shrugged his shoulders. "I came over to America young—and a good thing, too. But the old people, it seems like they're always going to church—even twice a day, like my aunt. But, you know," he added, "they're scared—they don't know what it's all about."

I had read what the papers hurriedly reported of the war's effect on Little Italy, of the sense of *vergogna*—shame—that the Italian Americans felt, the patriotic fervor for America and its ideals. I knew the Supreme Council of the Sons of Italy had met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia and pledged its members to purchase some ten million dollars' worth of defense bonds, that the Mazzini Society was holding mass meetings, that over one hundred thousand Italian American trade unionists were planning intense participation in America's war effort.

I was not thinking so much of young

Americans of Italian parents. Italy had never really existed for them, except in the memories, the talk, the ways of their immigrant fathers. If there were roots back there in the old country, they were not permanent ones; at least not abiding enough to become a vital issue in the war. The problems of these New Americans were the problems of New Americans anywhere; their resentments and adjustments were those of any youth. Certainly they were called "Wops," were ignorantly Peglerized here and there; but America—and Little Italy itself was a product of America—America and the city moulded them. These were the sources of their bitterness or contentment; these, ultimately, gave them pride, hurt, ideals, life-standards. The only danger would be narrow discrimination by employers or suspicion by fellow-Americans. But surprisingly, as far as I could determine, there had been little of either.

The young men and women spoke directly, neither cowering nor timid.

"Mussolini—what a sucker."

"He's behind the eight-ball, where he belongs."

"Italy, hell! My brother's driving a jeep. I'm going to get in myself—Marines!"

The only queries that puzzled them and made them stutter embarrassed answers were those on their grandparents and sometimes their parents. Whatever of sadness and inarticulateness they felt lay in this direction—their inability to bridge the gap between their lives and the world of the older people.

At the Church of the Most Holy Crucifix on Broome Street, mothers were out with their baby carriages.

"We're going to sew for the Red Cross," a young mother told me. "Six of us on this street."

A squat woman with finely-cut features, silver-white hair showing from beneath a black lace shawl, stepped out of the church. A rosary dangled from her fingers. She pulled her coat close around her shoulders, glanced at us, then plodded across the street.

"Like my grandmother," the girl said. "She's always talking about her sister and brother in Italy now."

"What does she say?"

"Just keeps talking about them—what they used to do together."

"And your mother?"

"She lights a candle every night beneath a picture of the Virgin Mary in our living room." Then she smiled suddenly. "But most of the time she's baking something for my brother at Fort Dix."

John's grocery store was small but prosperous. He was middle-aged, and the last time I had talked with him, he was ready to become naturalized. Now he told me:

"The people in Italy do not want to fight. If I'm there, I say no—why should I fight? For who? For what? For Germany? No. So the soldiers do not fight. If for their country, that's different. But what do they get if they win now? Nothing, nothing. So they're smart too, they don't fight. They lose, give up. Now it is better for Italy to lose. She will get more in the end that way. If she win, she get nothing—just Germany for a boss. If she lose she get something, maybe. No, no—I was in the last war, against Austria. I know. The Italian people do not want this kind of fighting. . . . This country? Good to me. I make better living here than in old country. If she say go tomorrow fight

Japan, I would go. . . . But Italy? No, she must lose—that is best for her."

In a restaurant on Mulberry and Canal, I sat beside a young Italian truck driver.

"What's the latest news?" he asked me.

"I haven't heard," I answered.

"That Jap attack—hell, no two ways about that," he said. "I was in a bar the day it happened." Then he added belligerently, "They started it. We'll finish it."

We ate for a few moments. Then the radio began blaring the latest news in Italian. The woman who waited on us stopped her work to listen.

"How do you stand in the draft?" he asked.

"3-A," I answered.

"Me too—married," he said. "I've been thinking of joining the Navy though. There's more chances in the Navy."

"Tell me," I asked abruptly, "how are the old people taking it?"

His brows creased, and unconsciously, almost automatically, his gestures betrayed him. The question disturbed him: he did not know the answer.

"Well, you know how they are," he said, with a helpless wave of his hand. "They don't know anything. They don't count, anyway."

I kept thinking of that October day in 1940 at the Grand Central Station in New York when I saw a National Guard regiment off to camp. The place was jammed with friends and relatives thronging the train gates. Italian mothers, in their perennial black satin dresses and round black straw hats, were already weeping.

The gates to the train opened and the soldiers started marching down the ramp. The air tightened with emotion. Somehow we all sensed this was the real thing, and the women surged forward.

"Mio figlio!—my son!"

## COMMON GROUND

It was the scream of an Italian mother in the crowd.

"It's only training, Mother," I heard someone say.

Then I was out on 42nd Street once more, but unaware of the noise and traffic—hearing again, "Mio figlio!" It was more than a mother's cry; it was more than a cry of anguish and protest. There was in it an hysteria, a helplessness, an incomprehension. It seemed to come from the depths of another world. . . .

Now, after the declaration of war, I heard it again.

It was not fascism which moved the older people to doubt and question. They had never understood its implications. They had understood only that Mussolini was a great man, headlined in news, respected by people in high places. They who first clustered in Little Italy, who never belonged in human terms to the city and country, took a natural pride in Duce's stature. For many he was a compensation for their inferiority. Fascist agents were clever enough to exploit the economic obstacles in their lives, to feed on their uneasiness and indirectly to knock American ideals—unrealized among the poor and ignorant and culturally dispossessed—and to praise the rising star that was Italy. Well—so—after years of poverty, Italy was all right, becoming rich. It was something to be an Italian. In some cases an undefined frustration was converted into a fierce pride that brooked no criticism of Duce and fascism. This attitude was a surety in their world of painful assimilation and new generations who had no time for them.

The first shock was the alliance with Germany. A distrust, partly historical and partly native, shook many. Roosevelt's stab-in-the-back speech confused more: some felt a sudden anger and antagonism against America; some were shamed.

Many felt responsible for Mussolini's treachery; they did not condone what the fascist leader did, but having naively admired him so long as a world leader, they were unable to separate the illusion from reality.

Then came the declaration of war. They were alarmed. Women prayed; men who had crowded stores boasting about the good Mussolini had accomplished, who had argued with their sons and daughters not logically, but emotionally—these men were tight-lipped now. For them it was not democracy versus fascism: it was America versus Italy; and this was a situation they had not been prepared for. Negative in their reactions, stupefied by the deluge of so many conflicting and unintelligible issues about them, they were adrift, belonging neither to America nor Italy. Now they were bitter, tortured and afraid.

The truck driver and I left the restaurant together and made for the subway. On the corner of Canal Street, I saw several women walking toward the Franciscan church—all past middle-age, all heavy and slow-moving. They were talking in Italian.

Behind them a group of youngsters, led by a seven-year-old wearing a tin American helmet, charged an unseen enemy. The leader whirled a wooden gun above his head. "Get 'em!" he yelled.

The women stepped aside to let them bang their way past.

Then, patiently, they resumed their walking, climbed the steps, opened the large oaken doors, and entered the church.

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## MASARYKTOWN

JOSEPH LAWREN

I DON'T understand," said Bixby. "We did everything! Those were swell posters. Our publicity was bang-up; the papers gave us more space than we could use. Every organization worked with us. And what did we get? Eleven per cent! The worst record of any city in the State!"

It was true. Only eleven per cent of all those within the Home Defense qualifications had registered in our southern Florida city.

"I give up," Dixon said. "I thought our town was more patriotic than some of the cities—New York, for instance. We're nearly all Americans. But they got better results. I just don't understand it. Perhaps we've fallen down on our publicity. Let's have another drive."

We studied the list of cities before us. None of the places had fallen below a registration of fifty per cent. We worked all evening over the long distance telephone and finally, after talking with the heads of drives in various cities, had a pretty clear idea of the organization, labor, and publicity they had employed.

Then Dixon said, "I've heard there's a little place up near Brooksville that did even better than eighty-five per cent. Of course I take that with a grain of salt. But they might show us some of their publicity."

"Where's this?" asked Bixby, incredulity in his eye.

"About forty miles from here, I guess. I don't know the name of the place—only foreigners live there, they tell me. They raise chickens."

The items clicked in my mind. I had once driven through a small settlement ten miles south of Brooksville called Masaryktown and had been told it was a colony of Czechoslovakians, named after Masaryk, the father of their country. If the report were true, it might be worth our time to drive up to see how their successful registration had been brought about.

Thus the three of us, in Bixby's car, sped northward in the morning toward the unknown "foreign" settlement of Masaryktown.

A swinging sign halted us: "Hotel Masaryk."

"This must be the place," I said.

"There aren't any signs or posters about their drive," said Dixon, skeptically. And nothing "foreign" about the hotel, I thought: good indigenous 1941 Florida architecture.

Just then the door of the hotel opened and the ruddy face of the proprietor was framed in the doorway. "Come in," he said. "Welcome to Masaryktown."

Here was our "foreign" accent, but the hotel parlor was as "American" as the exterior of the building.

To our questions as to the whereabouts of Masaryktown, he said, "You're in it. But the colony itself lies beyond the highway." It was hidden from view by a clump of trees more concealing than those that usually border the Florida roads. Over our drinks he gave us much of the story of the settlement.

## COMMON GROUND

Masaryktown was founded in 1925 by a large number of "Slovaks" from New York City, Cleveland, and elsewhere, who had a nostalgic desire to find a livelihood and independence on the land. This desire to return to the pattern of the life of their youth was fed by the eloquence of the great Florida land boom. The colonists migrated to these eighteen square miles of Florida scrub land—prepared to pick gold oranges in the cool of the dusk. Chroniclers of the citrus belt had assured them there was no work between the planting of the orange trees and the gathering of the fruit. They laid out the colony, naming it for Masaryk, the father of their native land. But the principal avenue they called Washington. In fact all the main avenues are named after United States' Presidents—Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt (F. D. of the species)—and the lesser lanes and streets are called after Beneš and other Czechoslovakian worthies. For, although the settlers loved their old country, said the innkeeper, their first allegiance and love was for the adopted land that had given them freedom without the continuous struggle to retain it they had known in Slovakia and Bohemia. They were ready to fight to preserve that freedom now.

It required little urging on our part to get him to continue the saga of Masaryktown—how the promises of the real-estate boomers had shriveled before disillusioning fact. Under poverty-stricken soil and other discouragements, they had turned from oranges to onions, sweet potatoes, and other products. Here again they were doomed to disappointment. They were on the point of abandoning the colony when they began to have luck with chickens. Encouraged by this first success in wringing a livelihood out of the sterile land, they turned to the new venture, fortified by their native Old World skills in the raising of geese. Year

after year the colony had increased its poultry acreage and market until now Masaryktown was a prosperous, well-knit settlement with a one-crop product—poultry. There was no mistaking the hotel-keeper's pride.

At the end of his tale, he spread before us a half-dozen post-card photographs of a handsome young man in American uniform.

"My boy," he said.

"Drafted, I suppose," said Dixon.

The man's eyes suddenly reflected surprise. "Drafted? No, nobody drafted in Masaryktown. All volunteer."

"Congratulations," said Bixby.

"'Congratulations'? Why? We have to protect our country."

Bixby was silent.

The innkeeper's face took on an added pride. "And one of our boys has already given his life for it. He was lost at sea when his airplane hit another one and fell into the ocean. Young Knezo. A nice young fellow. Married, too. Drowned. Gave his life for our country, so we have placed a memorial in our cemetery to him. Want to see it?"

We did.

"I'll take you to the Mayor," he said. "He'll explain it better." On the way, he told us the Mayor was selected by all those in the colony 21 years old or over, but received no compensation—only hard work and a little glory.

The Mayor left his egg-gathering to accompany us to the cemetery. Now we saw for the first time the Masaryktown that is hidden from the highway. The church was a trim red brick structure with a Czechoslovakian architectural outline superimposed upon a typical New England village meeting house with attenuated spire and weathervane cresting the surrounding trees. Then came the town hall, used for the civic activities of the community and also by the minority



Lutherans of the largely Catholic population. Inside, the Mayor pointed out the portrait of Masaryk, topped by the Stars and Stripes and a banner calling upon God to bless America.

Then we saw the school, built almost entirely through voluntary contributions, since there are no local taxes in Masaryktown. The Mayor explained that though many of the inhabitants taught their children the mother tongue at home, only English was spoken in the school and no "Czechoslovakian" had ever taught there. The primary object was to instil in the children the same love for America that had drawn their parents from the faraway homeland.

In the cemetery, a small, cool clearing in the pine forest, were a few gravestones of Czechoslovakian design under which rested immigrants from a land they had loved to a land they loved more. The outstanding monument was a simple boulder erected in memory of Stephen Knezo, the young man who had lost his life in the service of his country while serving as radio operator on a naval airplane.

On our way back to the hotel we saw immaculately-kept poultry farms, with flocks of white Leghorns and simple but substantial houses, some with Czech influence in their design. Near each house was an open oven, built after the pattern of its Old World counterpart. At some of these, women were baking bread. The Mayor explained that although each colonist owned and raised his chickens and was complete owner of his home, the community was founded and still exists in a spirit of communal help. Most of the houses had been raised like those of pioneer New England and the West—with everyone lending a hand.

Dixon showed signs of restlessness. He was on a search for information and explanation. Bluntly he put the question to the Mayor.

"How did you fellows," he asked, "make out in the Home Defense drive?"

The Mayor looked at him blankly.

"Make out?" he said. "Why, we didn't 'make out.' We had a hard time keeping those who were too young and too old from signing up. Everyone else signed up without our asking them to."

"You mean," said Dixon, "you had no publicity, no posters, nothing?"

The Mayor scratched his head.

"No," he said, "we didn't do anything. Our toughest job was to keep the Old One from signing. He's 90 if he's a day, but he's still strong and kept shouting at us that we couldn't keep him from joining up because he was still good on his feet and could shoot as well as anyone. He fought many a battle in the Old World for the Slovaks against their oppressors. So, finally, to please him, we let him sign up, and you can see him any day, practicing with an old gun and keeping himself in good physical condition, ready for anything. He says no enemy is going to invade his country—not while he can handle a gun."

We left the Mayor and the innkeeper beaming amiably after us. Soon we passed the last sign in Masaryktown, which reads, "Masaryktown. Slow."

Bixby came out of his serious mood.

"That sign," he said, "certainly is wrong. There's nothing slow about Masaryktown—at least when it comes to Home Defense."

"Right you are, Bixby," said Dixon. "But I don't understand yet how they did it. Do you?" He turned to me interrogatively.

"I don't know," I said. "But I think I'm beginning to."

---

*Lawyer and for many years in the theatrical business, Joseph Lawren is now a Florida resident.*

# ALMA JADED LOTUS BLOSSOM

KUM PUI LAI

ALMA Jaded Lotus Blossom Lai. Six pounds and ten ounces! Battleground of the Chinese generations in Hawaii. . . .

Advice on pre-natal care and after-care poured in from all directions. The grandparents on Daddy's side, sturdy stock from the village farmlands of Tung Koon, Kwangtung, China, claimed priority in bringing pigs' feet cooked in vinegar and ginger to the mother-to-be. Grandmother recommended that for an easy delivery she drink each morning a bowl of beaten egg soup, made with the addition of sugar and boiling water, and eat a raw egg to make the baby fair in complexion.

Mommy, however, would eat only the pigs' feet, and the grandparents shook their heads. Foolish to risk such grave consequences when egg soup and raw eggs were so potent.

But Mommy had completed courses in education, health, and bacteriology at the University of Hawaii. She had memorized Mendel's law of heredity, had written a paper on Darwin's theory of evolution, had studied chapters on the role of heredity and environment. She refused to comply with what she considered superstition. With pigs' feet it was different. Reader's Digest had carried an article explaining the benefit derived from eating pigs' feet cooked in vinegar, which released calcium from the bones and made the dish an excellent one for prospective and nursing mothers. She ate them with relish and saved "face" for the two generations.

The maternal grandparents were second-generation Chinese, born and bred in the Hawaiian Islands, and had never set foot on Chinese soil. Grandfather had even studied for two years at Leland Stanford University. Grandmother had not been permitted to attend American school as long as her mother lived. Outside contact, particularly Occidental education, her mother believed, led to mixed marriages. So, at 14, when she entered the first grade—after her mother's death—Grandmother wore laced corsets and high-buttoned boots. In two years' time she had skipped and jumped to seventh grade, and there her formal schooling ended. But she followed the pranks of Maggie and Jiggs, the Captain and the Kids, Mutt and Jeff, the serials, and Dorothy Dix's advice to the lovelorn. She also read *The Care and Feeding of the Baby* and used it as her Bible in rearing her first two children. Her next two she brought up through experience.

Now she had an eye on Baby, named Alma after her.

Preparing for the arrival of Baby was as scientific as possible. Mommy and Daddy exhausted the pamphlets in Daddy's office. He was health education director with the Tuberculosis Association of the Territory of Hawaii and had a lot of them. They went to the public library and read books on babies. They wrote to the Board of Health for more. Then they came upon Dr. Herman N. Bundesen's *Our Babies, Their Feeding, Care, and*

## ALMA JADED LOTUS BLOSSOM

*Training* and referred to it so many times during Alma's first month they knew it almost by heart. This they got from the insurance salesman; Daddy had provided for wife and Baby, should he die prematurely. Not his the Oriental attitude—nor the chance—that little Alma should support him in his old age. He would provide in the American way for retirement.



Daddy and Mommy had been brought into the world by midwives. For Alma, the services of a medical doctor had long been retained. She arrived without fanfare of Chinese firecrackers, but it was early morning and the Hawaiian mynah birds chattered their noisy best in the trees outside Queen's Hospital.

Once she had put in her appearance, there was the problem of a name. Alma, her American one, was a departure from Chinese custom; it is not the practice to call a child after any relative. To follow race tradition, her paternal grandfather was asked to give a middle name—Chinese, of course. Since Grandpa was a goldsmith, Daddy's name was Kum Pui, meaning Golden Girdle or Golden Obedience. His brother was Golden Happiness;

a sister, Golden Peach. Logically then, Alma's generation name pertained to jewelry. Grandpa decided Yuke or Jade would befit the new granddaughter; jade symbolized long life.

"Here are three names," he said. "Choose one." Anglicized and translated they read: Yuke-mui or Jaded Plum; Yuke-lan or Jaded Lily; and Yuke-lin or Jaded Lotus Blossom. Alma Yuke-lin Lai sounded most euphonious to her American-schooled parents. It was immaterial whether she be a plum, a lily, or a lotus blossom.

Grandmother was happy, but she sighed. "If only Baby were a boy! Then we would ask the officials of our village in China to have the name registered. There would be a special ceremony at the temple and a lighted lamp would be hung at the gate! And our village kinsmen would share our roast pig!"

That roast pig. A baby girl, then, was a blessing in disguise, financially speaking. Hospital and medical care and the passing of roast pork on this side of the Pacific to over a hundred families had involved enough money without dispersing more to relatives in China.

Alma Jaded Lotus Blossom's grandparents had given thousands of dollars worth of gifts in their three decades. Birthdays of neighbors, marriages, births, deaths among friends and relatives (the latter including anyone having remote connection with their village in China, either by birth or through marriage), Chinese New Year, Christmas, Full-Moon Festival—all these had taken heavy toll of their thin purses.

But now Alma J. L. B. reaped heavy dividends. Mommy and Daddy had not even a speaking acquaintance with nine out of ten who brought presents. There were 17 blankets, 8 bathrobes, 6 silver spoons and forks, 12 dresses, a couple of live chickens, Johnson's baby powder, a

## COMMON GROUND

chamber pot, jewelry, mosquito nets, dress goods, pillows, diapers, disposable diapers, etc.—and, most welcome of all, \$130 in cash!

Still, it was not all clear profit. To the older Chinese who brought gifts was passed a pound and a half of roast pork, a handful of sweet pickled ginger, two eggs dyed red, and two stuffed buns. An attempt to eliminate this custom among the younger generation ended only in disaster. "Perhaps my gift was not handsome enough to warrant the roast pork," they said icily. Even now, A. J. L. B.'s Mommy and Daddy wrinkle their brows when they recall their flouting of tradition and the dozen or so who did not receive roast pork with trimmings. To make amends they planned a round of dinners and even staged a couple. Then Mommy had difficulty in keeping maids. She could not compete with Uncle Sam

who offered as much as \$130 a month to janitresses in defense work at Pearl Harbor.

So Alma Jaded Lotus Blossom has reached her first birthday and is not yet completely paid for. Too late now—after her first month—to pass the roast pork. Stage more dinners? Almost impossible under martial law in Hawaii—as civilians must be off the streets by 6 p.m. Mommy and Daddy are in a dilemma.

For once they wish they had been more conservative about breaking a custom of their ancestors. . . .

---

*Kum Pui Lai is engaged in health education work in Honolulu. Japanese bombs have held no terror for A.J.L.B., writes Mr. Lai. On the contrary, "she is gaining weight while her parents grow thin bringing her up."*

This America is only you and me

—WALT WHITMAN

Alexander Alland, who has long been engaged in exploring the vast human resources of the country with his camera, reflects the spirit of Whitman in this montage-portrait of America.

The picture of the young Americans on page 62 is used through the courtesy of the Farm Security Administration.





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Hitler and the  
undred employes and the  
from the President  
immediately after  
"So far as the  
entiments had disbanded or gone  
er cover.

## ARMAN SOCIETIES EDGE U.S. WAR AID

00 Groups in City Join in a  
rogram of Defense Dona-  
tions and Service

ADERS STRESS LOYALTY

## Filipino's Spy on Japs For MacArthur

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15 (AP).  
—The Japanese announcement  
of ruthless firing squad rule for  
the conquered areas of the Phi-  
lippines shows that a column of  
Filipino patriots is at  
ind the invade-

## OREANS IN AMERICA EAGER TO AID IN WAR

Dr. Kei Won Chang Calls  
Them 'Champion Jap-Haters'

American Kore-  
champion Jap-hate-  
are taking an active  
States war work, a  
article by Dr. Kei  
the Oriental Librai-  
University made pub-  
ALIANS TO BUY BONDS

of Italy Plan Drive for  
\$10,000,000 Purchase

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.  
PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 20.—The  
preme Council of the Order of  
ons of Italy, grouped around the  
Independence Hall,

liberty  
oday  
ity to  
ing u  
power

As  
support which the  
to give this nation, it was an-  
nounced by Felix Forte, Supreme

## 100 Bond for MacArthur Sent to President By New Yorker Born in Russia on Same Day

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Wal-  
ter Silber of New York, who  
th himself as an "ex-ser-  
Japanese War,

## French Refugee's Company Wins a Navy 'E' For Producing Shells Ahead of Schedule

## ITALO-AMERICANS RALLY TO U. S. AID

Representatives of 110,000  
rade Unionists in This  
Area Form Defense Unit

I. O. A. F. E. J. M.

Alien Seamen Help U. S. Buy a Bomber  
By the Associated Press.  
BOSTON, Dec. 20.—Every man  
of the part alien crew of a grimy  
coastwise collier donated a day's  
pay today to "buy a bomber—a  
Christmas present to the U. S.

## NAVY MESSMEN IN PEARL H

NEW YORK, Jan. 1.—Messmen  
in the United States Navy  
fight wha-  
The 29 officers and men of the  
Mystic Steamship Company's col-  
lier Edward Peirce turned over a  
hard-earned \$124.61 to a navy  
commander.  
Six of the crew are Spanish  
allens.

## American Indians on Warpath

terday to set up a  
ganization to pur-  
tion of  
READY TO GO WITH 7 SONS  
Rochester Man From Norway, 60,  
Says America Is Worth It  
N. Y., Jan. 29 (AP)  
old natural-  
has

## ST. STANISLAUS CHURCH MAKES RECORD PUR- CHASE OF BONDS

Ex-Slave Aids War  
Efforts; Buys Bonds

## U. S. Private, 22, First to Land

A 22-year-old American private walked  
down eleven steps to fame when the AEF  
landed at a North Ireland port yesterday.  
He was Milburn Henke of Hutchinson,  
Minn., son of a German-born father whom  
he has promised to "give the Germans hell."

EG, Canada, Jan.  
ety - seven - year-old  
rooks, former Ken-  
orderly for Gen.

Grant  
had  
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aid in  
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## As A Made

The Flag T  
Has Nev  
6:30 E

Offers Life to Country a  
Morris Sam Waroshill, 76, ay  
composed yesterday as a mem-  
listment "suicide sub" crew. He  
served four years in the Russ  
he was born in Russia, has  
for 35 years, lives in New

# War Brought Unity to These N

support which the  
to give this nation, it was an-  
nounced by Felix Forte, Supreme

ter Silber of New York, who  
th himself as an "ex-ser-  
Japanese War,

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—Wal-  
ter Silber of New York, who  
th himself as an "ex-ser-  
Japanese War,

## Anti-Fascist

The Indipendente Milazzo  
Society, Inc., an organization  
composed of former residents  
of the town of Milazzo, Italy,  
living in South Brooklyn,  
today that it

Greek Americans  
in Defense Drive  
From the Aurora (Ill.) Beacon-  
News comes the news that Auro-  
ra's Greek Americans have  
ized to do their  
Greek

## Jews Off

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NCH meet



# Mayor Knox cites Nisei heroism

## N PROVES HERO RBOR DISASTER

entrants, alth  
s which were

Buy Gun for U. S.

ANA, Cal., Jan. 10  
American-born Japanese  
started a drive for  
buy an anti-aircraft  
to the U. S.

ously the first

### Brother's Wound Sends Boy to the Navy; Rumanian-Born Machinist Follows His Son

ar-old Adolph Weissman  
st Third Street, Brook-  
vorn into the Navy yes-  
towed that the Japan-  
a mistake

"It was one of those things,"  
said, "The kid is out  
want to be a machinist."

### Chippewa Indians Declare War Against Axis

ASSININS, Mich., Jan. 30 (AP).  
The Chippewa Indians of Up-  
per Michigan—1,000 strong—  
were formally declared  
axis to

### GERMAN-BORN PARENTS LOSE SONS IN HAWAII

Two Nebraskans Killed in Action  
—Tennessee Brothers Die

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES  
OMAHA, Dec. 16.—Mr. and  
Max Mueller of Omaha, both  
many, were notified

### 20,000 Applaud Mayor's Pledge Free Italy

Lab  
Council Gives LaGuar  
\$20,000 for Red C

### ALIENS MEET HERE AS BLOOD DONOR

New Legion of Volunteers for  
National Defense Has Rally  
Attended by 1,000

## Again With Ancient Skills to Help Beat Axis

ad been hurt in action,  
clamoring to join the Navy

Hawaii Air Forces Now Headed by Brig. Gen. Tink  
of Osage Descent, and Others Are Pilots; Man  
Give Native Talents to Key Industrial Jobs

## rateful Immigrant Boy Sam Dambrosi The Pledge He Keeps On Route 2 Now

t Meant So Much To Him Then  
Been Forgotten, And At  
ning He Proves It

making  
air mastery.  
The craftiness of Indians  
and their liking for

ed for en-  
of a two-  
te that he  
Navy, that  
a citizen

### German Women Are Sewing, Too But Here—and to Help Britain Crush Hitler

By HENRY BECKETT  
Every Wednesday night about  
the German women sit around a  
Union

England.  
Scarcely an  
have their na  
atives in Hitle

born leader of the Nisei movement—com-  
posed of loyal Americans of Japanese  
birth—declares that, as a racial group, the  
Japanese have the largest ratio of enlist-  
ments in the American army

### Armenian, 2 Years Here Gives Pay Check for Arm

## w York Immigrants

### Christmas Services

ers and civilians volunteered  
nan New England military  
arnings posts Christmas Day  
Christians might observe the  
their families.

### Italy Fights Axis

Italy is organizing to fight the Axis.  
ly-formed East Side Federation of  
o Defend America will hold a mass  
Friday night, Jan. 23 at the

These Are the Immigrants Who Live on the Lower Ea  
Side of New York City and Who Bought \$250,000 Worth

### Defense Bonds

#### Aircraftsman Iturbi

Jose Iturbi, the pianist, offered his mil-  
lion-dollar hands to Uncle Sam for the dura-  
tion.

He enrolled as a member of the Civil Air  
Patrol, an organization sponsored by the  
Office of Civilian Defense to muster Amer-  
icans into action as ferry and

### Immigrant Gi \$50 To Aid U. S. Defense

LOWELL, Mass. (AP) — I  
cause he loves his adopted cou-  
try and wants to do some  
ative of A



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## THE TWO AMERICAN HALF-WORLDS

WALDO FRANK

THROUGH no virtue of our own, through no innate superiority over Europe, Asia, or America Hispana, our task today is to save the continuity of western civilization. By itself Europe is prostrate with its disease and will be, for long, from its effects. The creative powers of the East, huge in China and Russia, are not turned toward us. The profound reservoir of cultural strength in the Indo-Hispanic world must first be gathered and stored before it can be tapped. Destiny has given us a great assignment. And we must go about it in the midst of a war which is only a symptom of a global counter-revolution that is in us also.

It is fairly clear by now to great numbers of people that the failure of world democracy, during the past two hundred years, to enact its values in the social-economic terms of a machine civilization has brought about the lethal disease of fascism, whose present form is a clash between many nations. The immediate causes of this disease have been ignorance, indifference, complacency—and, under all, ignorance. It is on these that Hitler and Mussolini, like cancerous growths, grew fat. It is these—while Spain and the German Jews and the Ethiopians and China and Czechoslovakia were being murdered—that made the democracies say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The ignorance has been ignorance of the nature of man, hence of his relations, of his needs, and of his destiny. While we fight the military threat that is only the present symptom of this deep disease, we are not

free of it ourselves. And nowhere is this clearer or more dangerous than in our relations with America Hispana.

Our intentions with Hispanic America are good. Hemisphere defense is a real need and we are urgently right to establish military and naval bases and economic treaties; we are right to call for inter-American conversations. But if the history of the past decades in Europe proves anything, it is that the best intentions may go wrong. Witness the League of Nations; witness international socialism whose purpose was to enhance the dignity of man and whose inadequate premises about man's nature perverted it into totalitarianism. Witness the Weimar Republic which begot Hitler (with the democracies' help). Witness the British Labor Party whose criminal blindness and sleazy opportunism allowed Britain to lay the foundations of the present conflict. So naive were our well-intentioned fathers—even such men of genius as Rousseau and Karl Marx—that they believed collectivism, which was inevitable under machine production, must inevitably bring social democracy; that they were confident the end of certain institutions such as monarchy would mean human freedom—as if man's deepest problem were not to free himself from the inherent tyrannies of his own nature. The key to all our heartbreak is the ignorance which has betrayed our best intentions.

Let us confine ourselves here to inter-American aspects of our ignorance. Super-

ficially in our Americas there is peace and collaboration: the Central American republics have even followed us into war. Meanwhile, beneath the political and economic agreements that a day's events might shatter, there is isolation and distrust; there is less mutual misunderstanding than sheer lack of true communication. We do not begin to know even the political nature of the Hispano-American republics. Two opinions are common about them: that they are republics more or less like ours; or that many of them are fascist. Both are false. Our republic was the birth and growth of a fairly literate and homogeneous people, the heir to the traditions of Britain and France. With the partial exception of Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Chile, the Hispanic colonies (of course the term Hispanic includes Portugal and hence Brazil) were a chaos of races, overwhelmed by problems of economy and politics to which they had no answer but the obsolescent patterns of Spain and Portugal. Suddenly independent, these colonies had to take on political form. No form of their own was ready; and the rule of the mother countries—unlike that of England—was not designed to prepare one. They accepted a design imposed on them by their soldiers who were (like Bolívar) political romanticists and idealists schooled largely by the ideas of France and our own alien statesmen. Our republic, with all its faults, was an organic form derived from our ethnic-cultural roots—a form in which we proceeded to grow up. Theirs was at best a defensive armor against monarchic reaction: a theory and a dream, in which peoples of Hispanic, Amerindian, or African race expressed not their political coming-of-age but their infancy, not their organizational maturity but their creative chaos.

The alternative opinion, that the dictatorships in some of the Hispano-Amer-

ican republics are fascist, is equally wrong. No fascist ideology tinges the despotism, benevolent or malevolent, of any of these governments. Fascism in America Hispana—and I say it categorically—is alien to America Hispana: more alien than fascism in the United States, where it hides under native faces and native traits; as in our Lindberghs with their adoration of the machine and of success, and of the regime that has best manifested the spirit of the machine: the Nazis; or the Ku Klux Klan with its traditional race exclusivism; or the America First Committee, whose commercial-minded isolationism won the adherence of 15,000,000 of our citizens. The ideology under the dictatorships of America Hispana is always romantically democratic, racially universalistic, emotionally Christian. In Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, for instance, there is an old-fashioned centralized paternalism over a people politically dispersed and undeveloped, without intercommunication of work or culture or even language, since they do not read; a paternalism which the people tolerate precisely because (unlike fascism) *it does not interfere*—because, indeed, it clumsily collaborates with the democratic ideals and emotions, the intimate family and personal life of the humble man and woman.

On levels deeper than politics, the ignorance thickens. A select group of intellectuals in America Hispana seeks and knows, of its own initiative, what is truly creative in our past and present literature; knows it about as well as our own small intellectual elite. As to ourselves, our scholars have worked magnificently in the fields of Hispano-American archeology, ethnology, and history. Our galleries have welcomed the arts of Mexico, and our radio has popularized the more corrupt forms of Hispano-American music. But if the political exchange between the Americas is superficial and largely insincere, if

the economic exchange has been dominated by big business and will now be ruled by immediate military needs—poor guides for long-term equity and understanding—the life exchange has been almost non-existent.

Norway and southern France in the 12th century were probably separated by a hundred little wars. Yet that Norway and that France were closer together in values, in purposive exchange of ideas, in mutual recognition of each other's native dignity than the United States and Mexico today—despite the movies, the telephone, the radio, the Pan-American rhetoric, and the Pan-American highway.

## II

Why is this ignorance? We look on the United States as a complex world; and so it is. But it is simplicity itself beside the mazes of America Hispana. Our dominant stock is European; our minor elements were Europeanized centuries before they came here (like the Jews), or are held in strict subjection (like the Negroes), while our barbarous Indian tribes were long since nullified. The Hispanic peoples, themselves complex and never completely of Europe, married and mingled in Mexico, Central America, and the Andes with strong, deep Indian nations. Everywhere the old strains created new. Negroes mixed with Indians, mestizo with Negro. Vast Brazil, for instance, gives birth to a new Afro-Creole race that is neither African nor Portuguese.

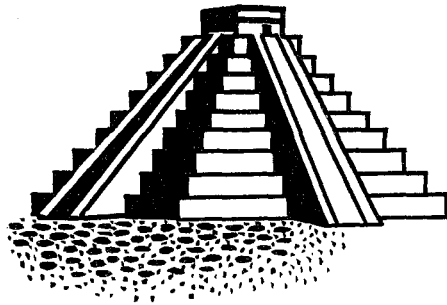
Here are bars to easy understanding of the difference between us. But there is more. The culture of our comparatively homogeneous people stems from the 18th century, from a late form of the English Protestant Reformation with its rationalism, from which come the machine and our religion of physical well-being. America Hispana, insofar as it is of Europe, is two centuries older: it is the child of the

Hispanic Catholic Renaissance and Counter-Reformation and in some of its deepest roots goes down to remote and wise cultures such as the Maya, the Toltec, and the Andean.

But even this does not explain the basic discrepancies, the stubborn ignorance, between us. *The crux is that each of the Americas is a half-world.*

America Hispana possesses a religious and aesthetic culture of a long waning agrarian civilization. Its values are essentially of the person; its knowledge—direct, intuitive—is that of close communion with the soil and the self. Why is this not enough? Why are these the elements of a half-world?

One dimension of every true person is his relation with society and with the productive powers of his age. The contact of the Hispano-American with his industrial tools is indirect and remote. His social-political values have the form either of an obsolete agrarian order or of a republic not yet naturalized to express him in his complex nature. However profound the sensibility and potential creative powers



of the Mexican or South American who is heir to a deep Indian culture; however brilliant the Argentinian, Brazilian, Colombian, or Cuban who has inherited more intactly, more profoundly than we, the energy of the great tradition of Christian Europe—these peoples do not yet live in a whole world, since deficiencies of

industrial, social, and political technics keep their states unstable, turn their wealth into a dangerous lure for foreign exploitation, and are reflected in the morale and thought of family and individual.

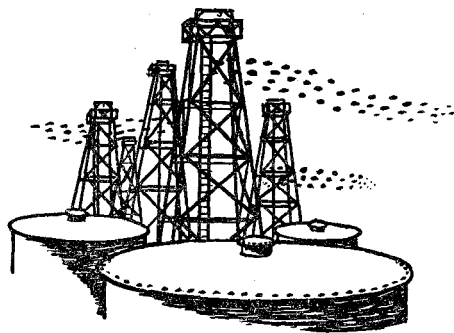
But we of the United States—do we live in more than a half-world?

We stem, I have said, from the 18th century. This was the century of technics, derived from the profound scientific philosophies of the 17th century and of even earlier men like Galileo and Kepler: mechanical technics that started the machine on its huge career of proliferation; and political technics, of which the paragon is that marvel of Newtonian balance applied to social power—the American Constitution. Thus we are adepts of the machine: not alone the machine of transportation, production, communication; but also the machinery of government. Like our British fathers, we know how to run not only our railroads but our elections and our chambers of commerce.

The 18th century, from which we culturally, psychologically, and institutionally stem, was also the Age of Reason, of Empiricism, of the abstract deisms that soon degenerated into religions of comfort, of sleazy humanitarianism, of physical well-being. It was the century of blind optimistic faith in “progress,” of the pathetic fallacy of Man—with no abyss of Devil, no height of God within him: of Man as merely a reasonable, utilitarian animal who can be counted on to behave if his stomach is full of food and his brain is stuffed with proper information—of a Man who never was on land or sea. The whole organic contact with the cosmos so profoundly expressed in the cultures from which America Hispana directly derives is thinned and denatured. The knowledge—intimate, intuitive, dynamic, creative—of the reality and tragedy of Being, grows dim in this 18th century of

bad psychology and wishful thinking. In us, as its most perfect children, while our technical powers have grown astronomically, our capacity has shrunk to know ourselves and our nature, and to employ the aesthetic and intellectual disciplines whereby man establishes his purposive place as Man in the true realm of Being.

Half-worlds! To use the modern jargon, that of America Hispana might be



called the introvert; that of ourselves the extrovert. We see the point about the peoples of America Hispana and its resultant dangers to them. Lacking machines, Latin America is vulnerable to the machines of conquerors; backward in political methods, it might fall prey to the politics of invaders. “We’ll fix that!” say our leaders. “We’ll protect them for ourselves. Our America’s Manifest Destiny is to protect them. We’ll send them machines to defend their frontiers and develop their resources. Until, by the grand magic of progress, they are absorbed in our American system.” That is what American business, under the palaver of the State Department, really thinks, in all the good faith of its stupidity.

Let us get at the fallacy by looking at ourselves. Our half-world (unlike America Hispana which knows its deficiencies) believes it is whole. That is why it believes it is ready to save the world (without



## THE TWO AMERICAN HALF-WORLDS

change of our way of living). But is our half-world safe? If we continue to rely principally on mechanical and external agencies to shape, defend, and nourish our world, will we not grow progressively weaker inwardly? Will we not become emptied of those imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual energies without which the scientific principles of the machine could never have been discovered and without which men can not control the machine—much less themselves—so that, as the tragic world today bears witness, it is the machines that run men into the bloody shambles?

Why do the Hispano-Americans fear us? Why do they exasperate us by doubting our goodwill to help them, by failing to make distinctions between our sincere co-operative offers and the poisonous imperialist Nazi propagandists who also profess to “want to help them”? Of course the difference between us and the Nazis is real. But there is a profound element of truth in the Hispano-American’s distrust. If we go down to them with our machines, in good faith *but in ignorance of their intimate values*, of the profound truths and dignity of the Mexican peasant, of the Brazilian woodsman, of the gaucho on the pampa, of the Andean mountaineer, do we not recognize—without the violence—the essential callousness and blind destructiveness that in a virulent form become the armies of Hitler?

No greater disaster could befall the United States than the absorption of the peoples of America Hispana by an alien machine-world—including our own (by which, of course, I mean a world dominated by machine-values, not a human world aided by machines). For the machine-world is alien to the human spirit, hence also to ourselves. The sole way to guard against this is not by merely professing our goodwill (this war is the shambles of goodwill); not by merely building

physical defenses; but by developing our inward life—the intimate world we have neglected. Without this, whether we know it or not, we go down to our neighbors as unconscious carriers of a blight of ignorance. And if the Hispano-Americans on the whole distrust us, it is because their intuitions tell them of this danger in our sincere goodwill; it is because their very weakness makes them clearer about us than we are about ourselves.

Even from the standpoint of sheer physical defense, they doubt us—because they see us as far more vulnerable than we appear to ourselves. And they are right! A people politically and industrially weak but decentralized and inwardly resourceful and strong in the knowledge of true human values will in the long run have more chances of surviving the present crisis than a people whose chief defense against machine-invaders is the machine. Without inward virility of vision and imagination, without real knowledge of Man, our nation might beat down Hitler and Hirohito, only to surrender to the machine and the machine-men within our borders.

There is a still simpler way for us to know the danger of remaining a half-world. Man’s nature tends toward wholeness. Half-worlds therefore arrogate wholeness to themselves. And this is a law: the greater the inward deficiency of the half-world, the more violent will be its insistence that it is all. What we call totalitarianism is simply a false wholeness, an effort by violence to body and mind to wipe out certain unintegrable and uncontrollable elements of life. This is no new story. The transcendental culture of ancient India, for instance, lacking technics to cope with a hostile exuberant nature, denied the reality of nature altogether. This was a totalitarianism of other-worldliness. Man can not tolerate the conscious-

ness of a half-world. If he lacks the humility, the strength, the genius, to create his world with all the sources and resources of life, inward and outward, aesthetic and political, then he begins to cheat: to deny and destroy what he can not make conform. We see this at its worst in Hitlerism with its crude false "whole" of a Nazi Aryan State. But the disease that is the father of the crime, we do not see in ourselves—in our own half-world.

### III

The truth that the Americas are two half-worlds, each needing what the other has, reveals the danger of the Americas, because it reveals the common ground, the common destiny.

The old world collapses; in every nation and no less in every human soul the old world falls apart. Menaced from abroad by virulent half-worlds such as the Nazi machine; and menaced within ourselves by inadequate knowledge and shallow cultural habits, we must create the foundations of a whole world of our own! And for this task, which is our duty and our destiny, each of the Americas profoundly needs the other.

We have something more besides the common ground, the common need of our neighbor's strength to fulfill us in our weakness. We have the common ideal. When the Americas were discovered, the term "New World" had no cultural connotation; we were a new world geographically. But when the dreams of the Puritans, the Jesuits, and the Revolutionary Fathers took root from New England to La Plata, the term "New World" began to have spiritual meaning. It came to mean the New Society, the free home of the New Man. The founders of the Republic, naive children of the 18th century, took the will for the deed. The New World, they thought, was here; their swords had

sculpted it, their constitutions had legislated it into being. Ours is a more sadly sober knowledge. We know that the New World has not yet been born; we know that powers wiser than legislation, stronger than steel, are needed to forge the New World that mankind thirsts for, lest it perish. We know that these are forces which only the most ruthless self-discovery can mine and master. But we do not undervalue the strength of the Ideal: this shared dream of the New World.

It makes for harmonies of temperament and nature between the American peoples that are far deeper than the differences of tongue, race, and way of living. It makes for the generous fresh energy that distinguishes our farmer from any European peasant, and relates him profoundly—the homesteader in the Mississippi Valley—with the homesteader on an Argentine *chacra*. It allies in creative will the poet of our West with the poet of Brazil and Chile even though they cannot read each other, even though they do not know each other. This dream of a new world is a heritage. But it is also an energy and integral as the blood. It is a spiritual blood that makes Bolívar and Jefferson, San Martín and Lincoln, brothers. That makes the peasant on the pampa, the miner in the Andes, the Nebraska farmer, the Detroit mechanic, the student in Michigan and the student in Santiago, brothers. . . .

### IV

One last word about method. It is not our province to instruct the men and women of America Hispana. And, in truth, they need it far less than we. Unlike us, they know that theirs is a half-world. Unlike us, they have from the beginning been aware of our strengths; loved us—indeed even romanticized us—for our strengths. And when we have persisted (we still do) in exporting to them

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with our machines the cheapest shoddy of our civilization—our movies and our bond-salesmen under various diplomatic disguises—their best intellectuals have found us of their own accord, found the good work of our writers and educators, and taken the treasure home.

It will be understood when I speak of our two half-worlds that I draw in rough black and white a portrait for which truthfulness would require a variety of colors. The United States is not merely the extrovert world of machines and machine-pleasures and unconscious machine-values. It is also the mother of great religious leaders like Roger Williams, Ann Hutchinson, Jonathan Edwards; of poets like Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville; of heroic thinkers like Charles Peirce; of profound popular saints like Lincoln. If indeed we had not expressed through our best men and women and in the will of our early communities our potential capacity for a great inward life, there would be no chance of our growth; we would be not a half-world destined to grow whole, but an abortion without future. Similarly, the people of America Hispana have not been lacking in men of genius even where they are weakest. They have produced great men of science; and to such famous political names as Sarmiento, Mitre, Juárez, Lázaro Cárdenas, scores of others can be added. Nevertheless we are half-worlds because, for perfectly explicable reasons, our growth thus far has been dangerously one-sided. With us, despite our many respectable writers and artists, the source-life of the people becomes increasingly ill-nourished. Our capacity to feel, imaginatively think, create, construct . . . to know Man and to know God . . . is being stunted by the national diet of money-centered movie, radio, and journal and, even more, by the slick technics of instruction that pass in our colleges and schools for "edu-

cation"—and most of all by the current popular philosophies of the country. This weakness of ours, which is bound to be accentuated by the war, is far more dangerous than the technological weakness of America Hispana, because, being a weakness of experience and knowledge, it saps



our experience and knowledge of our weakness; indeed it disguises our weakness as arrogant false strength.

This is why our current methods for increasing inter-American knowledge are largely sterile. Let us by all means exchange students and professors, translate books, multiply art exhibits, and Good-Neighbor missions, so long as these gestures do not fool us. Even shallow gestures of goodwill are of use; even insincere ones, since they bespeak at least our uneasy conscience. The fundamental flaw in almost everything we do, to come close to America Hispana, is that we do not know enough about ourselves, and hence about Man, to know our neighbors.

We are at war. We must consolidate our defenses, provide against the very real possibility of enemy invasion in the vulnerable South Atlantic and Pacific. But while we are at these elementary tasks of war, we must at once create the premises of the peace for which we fight. We shall not emerge from the present phase of

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conflict which is counter-revolution—we shall merely transpose it from Hitlerian to other terms—unless we begin today to create the New World of understanding. And our method in this must be primarily a method of home work. We shall never profit by what we import of America Hispana's intimate and profound vision until we search within ourselves: to know our spiritual hunger, our dangers, and our destiny; and hence to experience our need, as a half-world, of what the peoples of America Hispana have to give us. Conscious of ourselves, knowing our destiny, we will know and love them. Helping ourselves, we will help them.

Beneath the chatter of the radio and the roar of the guns, we must begin now to hear the intimate still voices of ourselves which make men know what is Man and the true food of Man. Let us create, in our schools and forums, imaginative courses in the comparative history, eco-

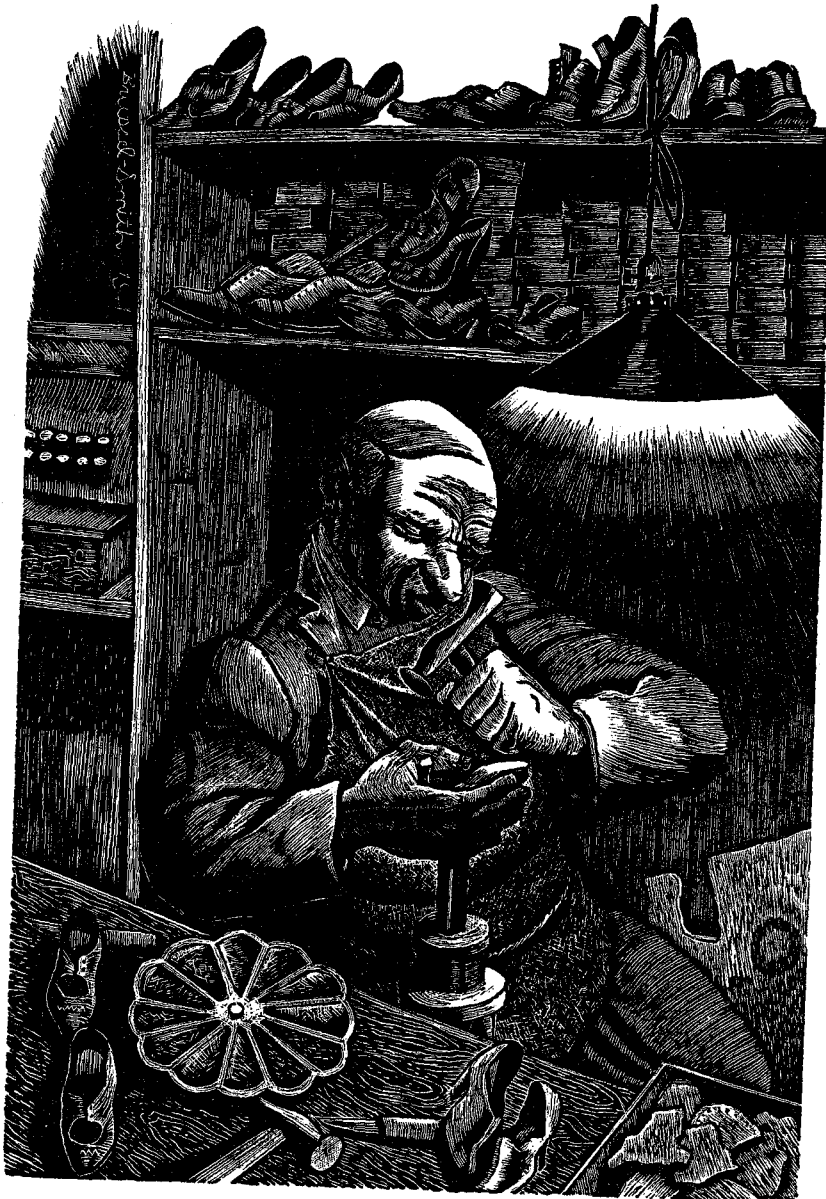
nomics, art, literature, and religions of the two Americas until a sense of the American nature . . . of the destiny of the American half-worlds to complete one another . . . becomes living. Our spiritual and emotional appetite will grow; our knowledge will deepen. Organically, then, (not by vote of a hundred committees) we shall grow aware of America Hispana. We shall be able to take from our brothers, as they from us, the strength that enriches him who gives as him who receives. We are at the bloody end of a doomed world. But we shall be about our true business: the creating of the New, the American World.

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Waldo Frank's *America Hispana*, recently reissued in a \$1 edition as *South of Us*, develops fully the thesis of this article and is accepted as a standard work by all *America Hispana*.

David Levine is the illustrator.

"Immigrant Cobbler" is the work of Bernard Brussel-Smith, who studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where he was awarded a Cresson Traveling Scholarship for study abroad in 1935. Art director for four trade publications, he spends his spare time at wood engraving and stone lithography. He has exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy Annuals, Oklahoma City, Oakland, California, and other cities.



## NORWAY AND NORWEGIAN AMERICANS

SIGRID UNDSET

WHEN I landed in San Francisco the end of August 1940, I felt sure that America was booked for attack by Nazi Germany. I was convinced that once launched upon a career of conquest, the totalitarian states would have no choice but go on. They would have to try to conquer fresh prey, since the only thing they had been able to achieve in their own as well as the conquered countries was to suck them to skin and bone for the benefit of a war machine they would never voluntarily dare to reduce. But I expected the attack to come from somewhere in Central or South America, from one or more of the countries where German underground workers have been trying for decades to grasp the power within the State, to loot it of everything the Germans might need, and use it as a base for the attack on the United States—that attack which had for a long time been the main goal of German covetousness, a fact that Germans in Europe freely admitted.

Yet, after a stay in the United States of more than fifteen months, I was as surprised and shocked as any American when the country was assaulted by the Japanese in Pearl Harbor. The general feeling of security here had crept upon me in a strange insidious way—the vastness, the distance from the conflict, the continual discussions of policy carried on always under the assumption that it was up to America to decide if and when and how far she would take an active part in the war. And since it looked as if the peril from Latin America had been largely neu-

tralized and a German conquest of Great Britain became less and less probable, I too began to think that after all America might never have to enter the war as a shooting partner.

I was unprepared for the vastness and beauty of America—a vastness that ought to make it unassailable and invulnerable. Most Europeans imagine it is a continent studded with big cities—New York, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, almost running into each other, large plants linked together by an uninterrupted chain of motorcars and trucks. The very first morning on the train from San Francisco to New York was a revelation. We were traveling across the great plain of Nevada, gloriously sage-green and sandy fawn-colored, with a horizon of mountain ranges as beautiful as any in the world. Later, a lecture tour took me through other landscapes, infinitely varied and always beautiful. Spring in New York State and summer in New England, a hemlock pine and a dogwood tree in bloom—these were worth having gone two-thirds of the way around the globe to see. I had not even heard about witch-hazel; it took me by surprise in an autumn woodland. And the American white elm is one of the loveliest trees on earth.

This feeling of vastness, I got most strongly in the Middle West. Walking about Chicago, driving through the farmlands of Iowa or Minnesota, I could scarcely believe I had really seen what I had during the war in Norway. I must have dreamed I had been bombed and



machine-gunned. Hitler seemed as unreal as the bogeyman. Small wonder that people out in those great spaces refused to believe America would ever be forced to fight for her life; small wonder they prattled about this war being just another "imperialistic" war between the dishonest and greedy European power states. Their own strong country having an abundance of all the goods war-depleted, ruined Europe needed so desperately, it was natural to believe they could well "do business with Hitler," without any detriment to themselves.

I was specially interested in the Middle West, for most Americans of Norwegian ancestry live there. There are great numbers of them also in the cities of the East and along the Pacific Coast, but the first waves of emigration from Norway to America went to the prairie states, where the poor of the Norwegian countryside, hungry for land they could own and cultivate, hoped to become prosperous farmers and founders of farming families. In Norway at the time of their emigration, *Odelsretten*—our ancient form of the right of primogeniture—still gave most younger sons of a farmer few possibilities other than staying at home as their brother's farmhands or quitting the soil. The daughters might become domestic servants to strangers or stay with their families as unpaid help. There was little future for them or for the day-laborers, the lumberjacks, the folks from the tiny holdings along the coast or up in the mountain valleys. They heard the wonder stories about those who had "made good" in America—owning farms, raising crops and cattle on a scale that to the average Norwegian country boy or girl seemed fantastic. People still had "America fever" when I was a child—that fervent yearning to go to the New World.

I think Americans will generally con-

cede that these immigrants from Norway and the other Scandinavian countries made good citizens. According to our way of thinking, you would dishonor the country of your birth if you did not wholeheartedly strive to be loyal to the country of your adoption. Even if many Norwegian Americans cherished their heritage from the old country—the Norwegian language, their customs, Lutheranism, the ties with relatives at home—they did not feel this as a divided allegiance. They sent money back to the people at home—sums that meant much to the slender budgets of thousands of Norwegian families; but few saved to go back to Norway to live. Most of them came from layers of the population where life had been cramped by poverty and lack of prospects. Now in America they were prosperous and sent for their relatives to join them.

Generally, even the first of these immigrants from Scandinavia had some education. Most could read and write, do simple arithmetic, were well instructed in their religion. Even fifty years ago, men and women who were entirely illiterate were looked upon as curiosities in Norway. Legislators who wanted to grumble at the ever-increasing budget for public education sneered that much of the money was spent to educate citizens for wealthy America. Yet the bulk of the emigrants had only an elementary education. What they knew of Norwegian culture was limited in scope: they were raised in the culture of a countryside, or a small town's small people. It was very often a valuable culture, stressing decent behavior, honesty, helpfulness, industry. The values could be, and were, preserved, but not the old forms in the new environment.

The attempts to keep up Norwegian customs in America resulted in something reminiscent of pressed flowers in an album. Recent arrivals from Norway are

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frequently reminded in a strange way of the world of their grandparents when they attend social functions among Norwegian Americans or read American newspapers in the Norwegian language. These papers are doing a very great and important work just now—as the sole representatives today of the free Norwegian press, bringing news from Norway, reports from Norwegians who have succeeded in getting out of the occupied country. But much of the regular material—contributions from the Norwegian Americans themselves, letters to the editor, reprints of Norwegian literature, even the language and the spelling, belong to a Norway that people of my age recall only faintly from our childhood. Young Norwegians have never known it. We speak and write almost another language from that of their forefathers; they still sing songs our aunts and nursemaids sang to us, and which our young people do not know. They know mainly the songs of our proletarian poets and the poets writing local dialects. Ever since the art of story-telling gave way to literacy we have been a nation of voracious readers—our long winter evenings encouraged that—and it is not unusual for a small farmer or a housemaid to own a well-stocked bookcase. You may find Ibsen and Bjørnson in it, but the young now do not read them much—more is the pity; they read books by Falkberget, Duun, Updal, translations of Gorky, and works of young authors who belong to one or the other branches of the labor movement—and these are almost unknown to the Norwegian Americans.

In spite of the constant immigration—an ever-diminishing trickle, of course, compared to the first waves—in spite of visits by Americans to the country of their forefathers, present-day Norway seems very little known to the Norwegian Americans. The growth and gains of organized labor, the changed social system with co-

operation and social security and public health services, which had made Norway a good country to live in—in many ways a working model of democracy from which the great democracies, so much more complicated and difficult to manage, might have borrowed many useful ideas—this Norway seems almost unknown and little understood by them.

Yet in the spaces of the Middle West it became relatively easy to understand that the Norwegian Americans were in general supporters of an isolationist policy, that they wanted to keep America out of the war and imagined it was possible, that they felt they had paid off their emotional debt to the old country when they collected money and goods for Norwegian relief. Easy to understand, too, that knowing so little about present-day Norway they would believe any American newspaper man who happened to be in Oslo during the invasion and sent out dispatches about Norwegian “indifference” and “fifth columnists” who in reality would have been a very minor nuisance if the Germans had not succeeded in their surprise invasion of the main seaports, in making war upon us before we could mobilize a single unit of our army except in the North.

Now, with America drawn into the war—also by a surprise attack—things may be different. Americans of Norwegian descent will make fine soldiers, I think, eager and clever workers in whatever capacity their country calls upon them. And if, by and by, they come to understand more of the nature of this war—of which the First World War was really the beginning—they will also understand more of the Norway of today, of the real ties that make America and Norway parts of one and the same world. That is the world of the people who have developed democracy—developed it because to them it was the

way their traditions and desires and tastes and ideals had to express themselves, because it was their natural way of life.

They will understand, too, that even the First World War was only partly an "imperialistic" war, a war for markets and raw materials. Fundamentally it was a war between incompatible concepts of life, and also of empires. The British had acquired an empire haphazardly by the initiative of enterprising and adventure-hungry individuals, whose interests the homeland was then called upon to protect in colonies and mandates. In many cases Britain did this unwillingly and grudgingly and sought, consciously and unconsciously, to transform the colonies into self-governing dominions as quickly as they could develop adequate state organizations. Against this kind of imperialism stood another imperialism—the desire for empire by nations who had never encouraged individuals to be enterprising and adventurous without state control to curb them, and had therefore gained nothing during the classical age of colonization. Now they wanted colonies to exploit through centralized state organization. The First World War was already an attempt to stop the march of democracy by nations who had never had any leanings toward the democratic pattern of life. The present conflict is a new and desperate attempt by nations like Germany to destroy democracy. It knows that if the democratic idea unfolds and develops further according to its inborn tendencies, Germany must from decade to decade ever become a more backward country. She had to make the attempt. It is up to the democracies to see that it will be her last.

The cast of mind that has naturally led people to create democratic forms of government seems to be common to the people along the shores of the North At-

lantic Ocean. The neighborhood of the ocean and the necessity to gain a livelihood from the sea seem to have had something to do with the birth of this spirit and this temperament. The ever-receding frontiers of the American continent have had a similar effect. Christianity, of course, had much to do with the extension of freedom and civic rights to ever larger parts of the world, but it had this effect only among people who even before their conversion regarded liberty as a supreme good and necessity of life. As Christians they could not withhold absolutely from their fellow-men the good and necessary things of life. Yet it never occurred to the Germans or Spaniards, for instance, even when they were fervent or pious Christians, that liberty was among these. This is a fact the Atlantic nations will have to remember if the Allies win this war.

The Founding Fathers of America held "these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." So, too, did the Norwegians, and fashioned democratic structures out of their belief. This must be the basis for understanding and co-operation between Norwegians and their American relatives in the future—that though these "truths" have not been evident to many peoples of the world, they have been "self-evident" to us.

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*Sigrid Undset is well-known to Americans as author of Kristin Lavransdatter. Her recent Return to the Future tells the story of the Nazi invasion of Norway and her journey to the United States.*

## WHAT MUST LINDSBORG BE!

HOWARD W. TURTLE

ON Easter Sunday persons from nearly half the states of the Union will make a pilgrimage out to the plains of Kansas. They will travel along U. S. highway No. 81, through a land of emerald wheat fields and painted barns, until they reach the little Swedish American village of Lindsborg, Kansas, the Oberammergau of the Plains. They will join with the Swedes for a day in the annual *Messiah* festival, to be given this Easter for the sixty-first consecutive year. They will feast at smörgåsbord spread on the tables of good wives all over town. They will drink countless cups of brown Swedish coffee, and renew their zest for lusty dishes that make the tongue clack over names like köttbullar, kranskaka, sockerkakor, and ostkaka. They will hear the world's most distinguished presentation of Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*, by 500 Swedes who sing from their hearts. They will leave with the feeling that here, at least, is one place in the world where all is still well, for the impact of the *Messiah* has been the same through sixty years of war and peace.

The feeling that all's well in Lindsborg springs from the fact that the Swedes in that Smoky Hill River Valley settlement live the *Messiah* all the year 'round. The oratorio, with its message of Christ redeemed, is the basis of the community's life, its religion. Lindsborg, population 2,000, is a town where Christianity is practiced and made to work. Doors there are never locked, even in the art museums. There is a law-enforcement officer, Carl "Scoop" Elmborg, but about the only

time he is called to duty is when out-of-town cars run together on the highway.

A path has been beaten across the plains to Lindsborg's door by those whom the world has acclaimed great—among them Theodore Roosevelt, Mme. Schumann-Heink, and Prince William of Sweden. Now as the Easter season approaches, they are telling of the visit of another great singer, and the legend of the Nordica rose.

In 1908 when Lillian Nordica came to the West to sing the soprano solos in the *Messiah*, the young men of the chorus were so greatly impressed by her voice and beauty that after the concert they unhitched the horses from her carriage and drew her through the streets of Lindsborg shouting: "Nordica! Nordica!"

When they reached her hotel, Nordica, charmed by their gallantry, drew roses from her bouquet and tossed them to the cheering young men. One of them planted a sprig from his rose stem, and it grew in Lindsborg until 1931—"The Nordica Rose Bush." Now as the time draws near for another *Messiah* performance, Swedish housewives bring forth a family album or an envelope, and show visitors a cluster of white petals. In broad Swedish accent they say proudly: "A Nordica rose!"

The tradition of the *Messiah* goes back to 1869, to the town of Persberg in the province of Värmland in Sweden. There a devout young Lutheran preacher, Olof Olsson, dissatisfied with the religious re-

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strictions imposed by the state church, gathered about him 250 men and women to discuss an emigration that would give them the right to praise God as they pleased. They also wanted to find a place where they could earn a better living. Skilled mechanics in Stockholm were then making an hourly wage of 10 to 15 öre, that is, 3 or 4 cents. The pay of farm workers was even lower.

Olof Olsson said to his followers: "Emigration is going to increase. It is a necessity for people who must find a way to live. . . . Lawmaking has lost its way, and unless God graciously puts things to rights, the end will be bankruptcy. . . . In Småland there is famine to a frightful degree. Unemployment prevails all over the country. And yet the riksdag is about to vote a gift of 196,000 crowns to the newly-engaged Princess. . . . The Lord has visited his wrath upon our beloved land. Many of its lawmakers seem to have been stricken with blindness. Pray for our country!"

So they went to Lindsborg—the sensitive, erudite Olsson and his wife, parents, and a brother, and a party of 250 immigrants. Calling themselves *jordbrukare*, or landbreakers, they acquired land from the Swedish Lutheran Agricultural Company of America, a firm organized in Chicago to aid the settlement of Swedish immigrants. The first winter the pioneers fashioned dug-outs in the ground to survive the cold. The roof of one was punctured by hoofs of a stampeding herd of buffalo. In rain storms the earthen floors would be flooded and turned into mud.

Despite hardships, and almost before they got their first crops planted, the Swedes started to build for themselves a church. They made it of stone, quarried and laid by men of the settlement. It had a roof thatched with grass, cracks in the walls which snakes crawled through. One day while Pastor Olsson was preaching,

a skunk walked out from under the pulpit and gave the congregation an anxious time before it left. Nevertheless, in these surroundings the Swedes found the religious freedom they had been seeking. Said Olsson: "I am glad that I am free from the bonds and chains of the state church. I have never taken so much abuse from anyone as I took from the Swedish archbishop for the offense of having preached the Word of God wherever opportunity presented itself."

When Olsson left Lindsborg in 1876 to become a professor in Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, his place was filled by a young giant of a man, Dr. Carl Swensson, then 24 years old. Swensson came to Lindsborg from Augustana College, and he brought with him a bride. To the young wife goes the distinction of establishing on the Kansas prairie the Bethany Oratorio Society, which the world was later to acclaim.

On a visit to Europe in 1879 Olsson had heard in London a rendition of Handel's *Messiah* that moved him so deeply he immediately set about organizing an orchestra and chorus at Augustana upon his return. Outside groups co-operated, rehearsals were held, and the first performance of the *Messiah* was given in Moline in the spring of 1881. Swensson attended the concert and, like Olsson before him, was deeply impressed. In the winter of 1881, as a result, Mrs. Swensson began the enormous task of teaching the music to the people of her Kansas community.

Many of her singers could not read music. As Olsson had done, she put numbers above the notes as an aid. Fuel and lamps were not available for heating the church for night rehearsals, so women took turns inviting the chorus to their homes, sometimes serving coffee and dopp—fancy pastries—afterward. Pioneer farm-



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ers would finish their milking and go to *Messiah* practice; women would set the bread after supper, take off their aprons, and climb into buckboards to go along; farm boys would stomp into the rehearsal place in their heavy boots. There were not enough sopranos, so Mrs. Swensson chose young boys whose voices had not changed, and stood them up to sing with the women. One of these boy sopranos, Ernst Pihlblad, later was to become president of Bethany College.

Little by little the singers learned their parts. They gave the first performance of the *Messiah* in Bethany Church on Easter Sunday, 1882. Every year since then, the singing Swedes have made the oratorio resound across the plains. Mrs. Swensson herself sang in the soprano section of the chorus until her death in 1939.

The same year that the bride began the *Messiah*, her husband founded Bethany College. Dr. Swensson, a dynamic individual with flaxen hair and a booming voice, became known as "the Colossus of the Plains." Whenever a great storm rolled across the prairies, Swensson, like Beethoven, rushed out of doors, exulting in the heavenly power manifest in the roaring of the thunder and the crackling of the lightning.

He was able to make Lindsborg's cultural enterprises survive only because the Swedish pioneers gave him all the support their means allowed. Farmers put mortgages on their cattle in the feed lots and gave him the money to help Bethany College and the *Messiah*. Carl O. Lincoln in Lindsborg tells how Dr. Swensson once walked into the office of his father's lumber yard.

"Anders," he said, "how much money have you got in the till?"

"Ten dollars," the lumberman replied.

"Can I have it?"

"Of course," he said, "but what for?"

"Well," said Dr. Swensson, "the college has a \$300 interest payment to make. If I had ten dollars, I could buy a ticket to Kansas City; and if I got to Kansas City, I could borrow \$300."

Swensson paid the interest.

There is another story about his frequent fund-seeking trips away from Lindsborg. A few days before he intended to leave, he notified the railroad of the train he wished to catch. Then, instead of making the half-mile trip to the railroad station, he simply waited at his Bethany College office. When the train came along, it made a special stop and whistled for Swensson. The clergyman then ran out and jumped aboard. . . .

Death came to Dr. Swensson in 1904, when he was only 47 years old, but by that time the roots of the College and the *Messiah* were deeply planted in the prairie community. The institutions not only lived, they grew—especially the *Messiah*.

Today an Easter visitor to Lindsborg's new Presser Hall sees on the stage a vast white shell filled with 500 singers. The stage has been specially built for the oratorio society and is perfect for the purpose. The platform rises in stair-steps, and on the left and right are the sopranos and contraltos in white dresses, and in the center are the tenors and basses in dark suits and black bow ties. In front of the choir is the Bethany Symphony Orchestra, and in front of the orchestra four soloists, two men and two women, usually from New York. The conductor is Dr. Hagbard Brase, a tall erect man with a white Van Dyke beard. The chorus responds to a signal of Brase's baton, and the sound that rolls out is majestic. Through the music, the singers recount the story they believe—the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness; the birth of Jesus, His ministry, His crucifixion, and the triumphant resurrection, with its re-



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sounding *Hallelujah* chorus. You can't escape feeling the fervor with which they sing. Musical perfection and religious zeal combine to a magnificent end.

The chorus members give their time and talent free. Some drive as far as 100 miles, twice a week for three months, to attend rehearsals.

Visitors are always impressed by the conductor, Dr. Brase. He was born and reared in Sweden, and the reason he migrated to Lindsborg involves another well-known Swedish American, Dr. Birger Sandzen, the landscape artist. Dr. Sandzen had left his native province of Västergötland in Sweden to go to Bethany College at the invitation of Carl Swensson. Several years later, Swensson asked Sandzen if he knew a young man who would come to Lindsborg to play the church organ and teach in the college. Sandzen did—Brase—and soon Brase was in Lindsborg. He arrived in 1900, and for the last twenty-seven years has conducted the oratorio. Technicians of the National Broadcasting Company a few years ago expressed amazement at his performance when the *Messiah* was broadcast on a national network. At a trial rehearsal, the music ended exactly in the allotted time—to the second. But for the regular broadcast the technicians made plans to compensate for variations, both for a slower rendition by the chorus, or a faster. A few seconds before the program was completed, they began to nudge each other. It seemed the impossible might come true. It did. The timeclock in Dr. Brase's head had paced the chorus so accurately that again the rendition ended at exactly the proper time.

Another festival sprang up in Lindsborg last fall, and everybody had such a gay time of it the Swedes declared they would put it on every year. It was called "Svensk hyllnings fest," and it honored

the pioneers who came across with Olof Olsson. Citizens dressed up in colorful native costumes, and there was dancing in the streets, the intricate maneuvers of *Gustav Skol*, fiddlers playing ditties like *Jänta å Ja*, and the sound of the jingle, "My name is Yon Yonson, I come from Wisconsin, I vurk in the lumber mill dar." They put on a *smörgåsbord* in the College gymnasium, and visitors were flabbergasted at the amount of food in sight. Tables extended in an endless line the whole length of the gymnasium, then made an L-shaped angle across the entire width of the room—and all the table space was covered by Swedish food!

Now that the United States is at war, the good families of Lindsborg are sending their share of stalwart sons to the American Army. Some who have gone have been singers in the *Messiah* chorus. Those who remain are carrying on the sixty-one year old tradition with as much spirit as ever.

While the Easter festival will be important in the United States, it also will be important in Sweden, where the people consider the town of Lindsborg about the most important place in America. In Lindsborg they tell of the Swede who came to the United States with his wife from the old country. On landing in New York he gazed in amazement at the tall buildings, and turning to his wife exclaimed:

"Ja, and if this is New York, what must Lindsborg be!"

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A *Messiah* fan since the age of 15, Howard W. Turtle, whose London grandparents settled in a dugout in Kansas in 1881, has been reporter and copyreader for *The Kansas City Star*. Just inducted into the Army, he writes: "By this Easter I can't tell where I'll be headed—Lindsborg or Tokyo."

# YOU CAN'T MOVE A WINDMILL

ARNOLD MULDER

SOME years ago a group of Michigan Hollanders conceived the idea of moving a windmill from the Netherlands to their new home in America. They dreamed of dismantling a mill that had stood flailing the Dutch skies for centuries, loading it on an ocean freighter, carting it across the Atlantic, re-assembling it in its new location, and cherishing it forever after as an exact bit of Holland in America.

"It must be genuine," they said. "If, for instance, a mouse nibbled a corner off a board a century ago, we want that damaged board. If a thousand generations of worms worked their way through an oak beam while kingdoms rose and fell, we want those worm holes."

Every rusted nail, every broken peg must be preserved. Perhaps in the days when Napoleon was bestriding the world, a Dutch boy cut the name of his sweetheart into the wood of a cornmeal bin with his jackknife—they wanted that too. This was to be authentic.

The plan remained a dream; the expense was prohibitive. Since then has come the war. But even if these obstacles had not been insuperable, the plan could not have been fulfilled in any way worth doing. For you can't move a windmill, or anything else indigenous—be it a language or a literature or a political system. Inevitably much more remains behind than ever arrives. Emerson tells the story of the bird he found "singing at dawn on the alder bough." The philosopher brought the singer home; he even succeeded in bringing the song to his study; but the

real bird he never brought, for he "did not bring home the river and the sky." Shrewd old Trader Horn guessed that those who have only seen a lion in a cage have never seen a lion.

What would have remained behind if the windmill had actually been transported I learned some years later, driving through a district in The Netherlands so bucolic that life seemed almost to stand still. I passed one flailing lustily in a steady breeze from the North Sea. Curious, I stopped and climbed a ladder to the second floor, where the work of the day was in progress. The old Dutch miller, eyebrows thick with flour dust, greeted me cordially. He showed me all over the place and explained how the machinery worked. He asked many questions about America and marveled that there wheat was not ground by wind but by steam.

"And there are no windmills in America?" He looked at me with an impulse to incredulity. But only for a moment; he was too polite to cast doubt on anything the American *mijnheer* might be pleased to tell him. Besides, America was a strange, romantic, mad, incomprehensible land, where the good practical laws of ordinary life did not operate. "But how then do they get all their flour for bread?"

Oh yes, he knew about steam and electricity, but he simply could not imagine all the wheat and rye and corn being ground by such unnatural methods. So stupid—to let all that profitable wind go to waste!

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"Steam is so dead, *mijn'eer!*" he commented.

He moved a wooden lever here and adjusted a belt there; he scooped a handful of meal from the chute to test its quality, or threw a brake that made the huge wings revolve more slowly.

"Steam is so dead! Steam! What do you make of steam? It comes sizzling. It is made in a boiler. You build a fire under it—a fire of *steenkool*—and the steam comes sizzling. And if you don't watch out, the boiler explodes and kills you perhaps. What can you do with steam? It doesn't care!"

He seemed to suggest that the wind does care. Steam is an impersonal force: powerful and useful in turning the wheels of an impersonal factory. But you can't feel it on your cheek, you can't let it play through your hair, you can't absorb it at the pores of your body. The wind has a thousand moods. It is rain-laden or dust-laden; it has salt in it or the miasma of far swamps; it tells of storms on the North Sea or of coming calms over the flatlands of Holland. The miller plays with the wind; he accommodates himself and his mill to its every mood, now getting up at dawn and working far into the night because that odd feeling in his knees tells him a calm is coming, then again taking his time because the salt in the wind gives promise of strength and constancy. Oh, the wind is his friend; the wind is not dead, impersonal, uncaring. The wind is a member of his family, a presence in his home and his mill, the one unchanging yet ever-changing fact in his life; without it life is unthinkable.

Two hundred and thirteen years ago the miller's great-great-grandfather built this mill, and here it stands today as it did then. Two hundred and thirteen years and only fairly started! Wind doesn't grow old, wind doesn't go out of date. The oldest son in each generation has been the

miller by a kind of apostolic succession; the present incumbent's first-born is being trained to take his place—no doubt with sacred rites and sacraments.

"When your son takes charge, you will be running a windmill in heaven," I suggested.

It was the wrong note. He had humor, but not on the subject of heaven. He could not conceive of the beauty of a windmill there. He could not imagine himself working spirit levers; scooping spirit meal in spirit hand; feeling a wind in his hair that never lacked the sting of salt and never threatened to die down; joining with his father and his grandfather and the numerous "greats" who had watched the very wheels above our heads, grinding ambrosia for the celestial hosts that people highest heaven. Instead he saw himself in a long white nightgown, seated on an indistinct chair—indistinct because it was not exactly respectful to imagine a real chair in heaven—playing on a harp and singing long-meter Dutch psalms.

I shied away from the picture.

"Why do you have your mill on the second floor?"

"The wind, *mijn'eer*," laconically. Of course, the wind! That, properly speaking, was the answer to all questions—the wind. High enough above this flat land of canals and dykes to clear any possible windbreak of tree or house or hill; and high enough for the huge wings to revolve.

"Ja, ja," he said, "they speak of putting gasoline engines in all the mills in Holland, but it won't work. That kind of flour may pass muster in America (your people evidently don't know better, *mijn'eer*; how could they, never having used flour from windmills?), but here the people would not be satisfied. Steam and gasoline can grind wheat when the wind is not blowing, but they can never do it the way the wind grinds."

## YOU CAN'T MOVE A WINDMILL

He passed his hand through the flowing stream of rye flour.

"Just observe this carefully, *mijn'eer*; look at it. The big steam mills can't do this. They can grind but—"

He dismissed them with a wave of the hand, then gave the leg of his overalls a whack that made the flour dust fly.

"That's why we are so much healthier than the people who eat bread of flour ground by steam—it doesn't pay to go against nature!"

Milling by wind is permanent, he assured me. Take this mill—two hundred

existence, so that their very names have been forgotten, wind will still be turning this huge, intricate clockwork of wooden wheels to convert wheat into flour for the hungry.

He stepped out of his carpet slippers into wooden shoes, and we went down the ladder to the ground. He said farewell with a dignity that had a suggestion of the patriarchal. . . .

Not the windmill itself but something of that patriarchal dignity might with profit be moved from other lands to Amer-



and thirteen years. Its thatch had been renewed from time to time and glass windows had replaced mere shutters; but the solid brick walls of the octagonal structure were the same and much of the machinery was the same. But steam-driven mills! Steam today, electricity tomorrow, and no telling what next. Nothing lasting. A thousand years after all the unnatural methods of driving mills have gone out of

ica—the miller's devotion to a profession for its own sake, his pride in grinding wheat as no one else can do it, his sense of belonging in a background.

When they first arrived, the Dutch immigrants made a brave show of bringing The Netherlands with them to their brave new world—their language, their "way of life," even their institutions. Their sons and grandsons, brought up in an

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America that could not, by the very nature of things, accept these transplantations unaltered, expressed their uneasy longing in symbols—the tulip, the wooden shoe, the windmill. A Michigan factory turns out hundreds of thousands of toy mills, sold to tourists from a dozen states. A furniture factory uses a windmill vignette as its trademark. Gas stations are outlined against the American horizon in the shape of imitation windmills. The tourist stops his car in front of what looks like a Dutch mill, to consume an American hot-dog or an ice cream cone.

But much more is needed than this romanticism—encouragement for the immigrant and his son and grandson to build into American steam-driven grain elevators the integrity at the heart of the Dutch miller's every thought and word; to make a windmill vignette on a piece of furniture testify to a craftsmanship that extends to the wood out of sight under the veneer.

For half a millennium, for example, the Dutch farmer, because he lives in a tiny country, has been tilling his land inch by inch instead of acre by acre, his farm so small that a Montana grasshopper could almost jump over it in a single leap. Transplanted to America, some of these Dutch farmers have made fortunes out of waste land, have converted swamps into gold mines. Celery culture was not native

to The Netherlands; it was not transported to America by the Hollander; he brought with him only his skill in intensive farming. He took this plaything of American agriculture and transformed it into an industry that brought him wealth and America an addition to its diet. Grubbing among stump roots in swamp muck, he was laughed at because he thought he could make a living out of soil that had always been worthless. Largely on hands and knees, he transformed that "worthless" land into soil that brought a thousand dollars an acre. Later, driving his eight-cylinder car, he gave a lift to neighbors—perhaps the scoffers—who were still going afoot because they did not know how to till land on hands and knees.

No, you can't move the tiny farms of The Netherlands, even less than you can a windmill; but you can transplant the Dutch farmer's skills.

And when the immigrant learns that "you can't move a windmill," he is on the way to becoming an American in the real sense. Only then is he emancipated from debilitating nostalgia—when he puts it to work at building into America his integrity, his sense of continuity, his professional pride.

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## JULIA IS EDUCATED

SIDNEY MELLER

DESPITE her every effort Julia Polecci tended to be soft and limpid-eyed and sweetly Italian. We enjoyed her graciousness and occasional sparking temper, distrusted her dieting and avoidance of the sun and attempts at being crisply British. As social workers we'd learned a bit concerning human beings, and we wished she'd stop imitating and be herself. Herself being excellent, why accept a substitute?

When we gossiped and kidded together on Saturday afternoons before our weekend, along would come Julia and greet us in her most British fashion. She was forever citing English writers—she'd had courses in English Lit. at college. Bill McLean, who somehow always saw her coming, would whisper, "Here comes the English tradition," and sure enough she'd crackle off a British, "How d'ye do?" though if the conversation continued she often did relax and talk American. I once jokingly advised her to be herself, but she didn't get it or didn't want to get it, and a fellow usually doesn't persist in advising a girl to be herself—not after she's reached twenty-six and is likely to feel hurt.

One afternoon we caught the same streetcar, and I learned she'd moved to Telegraph Hill. The Hill lifts its head from San Francisco's North Beach region, the Latin district. She'd rented an apartment near the top, where she had a view of the boats on the bay, the island of Yerba Buena, and Berkeley and Oakland across the bay. The top of the Hill is to a lesser and lesser extent the hideout of

the Bohemians because more and more insurance clerks and stenographers and salesmen pay higher rents and take the renovated apartments away from the Bohemians who took them away from the Italians and Spaniards. When I saw her apartment, I realized she wasn't going Italian or Spanish. She was going Bohemian.

She had a portrait of some Lady by Sir Joshua Reynolds and a misty bridge by Whistler on the walls, a radio-phonograph and volumes of records by the three Bs, Mozart, Handel, Walton's *Facade*; she had a brick fireplace bearing two stiff blue candlesticks on the mantel, two Queen Anne wing chairs before the fireplace, and many books occupying set-in bookshelves—Shakespeare and Donne and Milton and Byron and Tennyson, complete in one volume respectively, Austin and Thackeray and Dickens and Galsworthy in sets, *Tom Jones* and *Gulliver's Travels* and some of Katherine Mansfield, *History of England* in two volumes, green, and a *History of English Literature* in one volume, blue.

For her housewarming she invited a group from the office—seven of us. The dinner was standard-restaurant: lettuce, tomato and avocado salad, chops and peas and mashed potatoes, apple pie and coffee. Afterwards we had highballs and talked case histories until Bill McLean groaned, and then we told jokes. Bill said, in a tone so easy and careless we all listened, "I met your mother yesterday, Julia."

Julia was leaning over and offering me



a highball when Bill spoke, and I could see from the way she straightened, then leaned down again, that she wanted to appear casual. "Did you?" she said. "I hope you told her you knew me."

"I did," he answered. "She's certainly proud of you."

"Wasn't it Shakespeare or someone who said mothers usually are proud of their children?" she rejoined and shifted the conversation quickly.

The next evening we walked up the Hill behind two oldish Italians who were speaking excitedly, often simultaneously, and I caught "Mussolini," "Inghilterra," "Roosevelt." I asked Julia what they were saying, and she shrugged. "Really, I wish you boys in the office would stop assuming I know Italian. I spent so much time at college and working that I haven't spoken it for years, and I never did know it well."

One night Bill McLean drove a couple of fellows and girls from the office to my place. We drank coffee and watched the boats skim over the dark water of the bay like illuminated skaters. Then Bill proposed we go to Julia's. The girls objected she wasn't the kind you dropped in on unexpectedly. But we went, anyway.

Julia looked constrained when she opened the door. She invited us in and introduced us to her mother, who had one of the pleasantest faces I've ever seen, serene and confident, with gray hair, a dark skin, and brilliant eyes. We got talking, and Julia asked who would prepare highballs. Her mother suggested, with an Italian accent, "Maybe they like try Italian drink, strega—yes?"

"I would," said Bill, and we echoed his assent. Without a word Julia brought out an amber bottle and poured the strega into tiny glasses. It was an excellent cordial.

Soon Bill had Mrs. Polecci telling how in the old country they crushed grapes

by dancing on them with bare feet. "Oh, Ma," said Julia. "They don't want to hear all that."

"Sure we do," said Bill.

But Mrs. Polecci had grown shy, spoke apologetically. "I break up the English. Julia is educated."

"Oh, go on," Bill urged. But she wouldn't, and everyone grew reserved and one of the girls mentioned the hour, and Mrs. Polecci said she had to go. Bill led her outside with the others he was driving home. Julia said she'd walk with me to catch a breath of fresh air. When she spoke, I realized she was furious. "Bill came over tonight on purpose to catch my mother there. What did he say when he asked you to come?"

"Nothing, except to drop in on you."

"He's always biting, sniping, just because I was born Italian. Well, I studied hard—you don't know how few Italian girls go to college. I've had to fight all the way, and then someone American like Bill snipes at me. I ought to slap him."

"He isn't any more American than you," I said. "His father came—"

"Yes, but he talks English naturally. I had to learn it." Perhaps she remembered what she'd told me earlier because she added, "I don't know much Italian now, but I spoke it as a child, have had to push it out of my mind."

"Can't you be American and still know Italian?" I asked.

"Are you with Bill too?"

"You brought up the subject," I answered. "It seems such a waste, to turn your face against your early years."

She turned suddenly and left me.

On Saturday morning an old Italian came into the office and sat in the chair by my desk. He made up for his lack of English by the loquacity of his fingers and hands, but I still couldn't learn enough to fill in the record blanks. McLean came

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by and advised me to get Julia to interpret. I said she'd told me she knew only a little Italian and he retorted, "Her mother told me she can speak it glibly."

He went into the back office where Julia was dictating. I heard nothing for a moment. Then she called him "Cad!" and stalked out, white-faced. She stormed at the man in Italian, and he grew humiliated, defensive. She saw this and spoke more gently, wrote down his answers on the blank. Her voice grew liquid, her eyes sympathetic. When they finished, she thanked him—I can understand the word *grazie*—and led him to the door and smiled as he left.

She turned around, her smile gone. She glided to Bill where he sat at a desk transcribing notes. He looked up. "Thanks, Julia. You helped us out of a pinch."

Bending over, she slapped him. Then she stalked back toward the inner office.

He got up. He could have caught her before she slammed the door, but he stood and rubbed his cheek. He looked at me and grinned, came over and sat in the chair lately occupied by the Italian. "This chair's still warm," he remarked inanely.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Invite her to an Italian dinner tonight. She's starting to loosen up."

"She'll whack you again."

He smiled, turned out his palm. "I'll bet five bucks that within two months she cooks us a spaghetti dinner."

"Five bucks," I agreed.

In two months she cooked us not only a spaghetti dinner but also a delicious sauce such as I had never before tasted.

She explained that only people from her mother's village in the old country knew how to make that sauce. "Mamma says I ought to send it to one of the recipe contests, but do you think Americans like Italian recipes?"

"Count the number of Italian restaurants in this city," Bill advised.

I've been thinking of Julia because I met her yesterday as she was pushing her buggy up the hill—healthy, smiling, easy. She's been Mrs. Bill McLean for a year and a half, and they have a son named Mario. Naturally we discussed the war and she said, "They can't beat us." But with her it wasn't the usual easy phrase. She was thinking of the Nazis and the Fascists and the war lords of Japan whose strength was only in hatred—the hatred of all peoples, even their allies. But here in America, she said, we had a kind of double strength because we were a people from all over the world and we respected and valued each other. That made us fight not only with our own power but with all the knowledge and strength of our separate backgrounds.

Every few yards she was stopped by an older man or woman who spoke Italian to her, and the third time she explained, "They ask how we're doing fighting the Japanese in the Pacific." And then she added, smiling with a quiet kind of pride, "I'm kind of a newspaper for them."

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*Sidney Meller is the author of two novels: *Roots in the Sky*, dealing with Jewish Americans, and *Home Is Here*, which concerns the Italian Americans.*

## A SOUTHERNER LEARNS ABOUT RACE

BREWTON BERRY

LET no one call me radical. I was born and bred in the Deep South, of a long line of Colonial Dames, D.A.R.'s, U.D.C.'s, and unreconstructed rebels. At a very tender age I acquired strong prejudices against Republicans, New Englanders, and the tariff. Even earlier, though, I had learned the orthodox racial creed of the South and had mastered the complicated code of interracial etiquette. I knew which race was superior and which had been foreordained to hew the wood and draw the water. It was perfectly obvious to me that Negroes were naturally lazy, musical, and incompetent. I knew "instinctively" how to deal with them. I addressed them as "Auntie," "Mammy," and "Daddy," but never as "Mister," "Mistress," or "Miss." They cut my hair and rubbed on the tonic but did not shake my hand. They prepared my food and served it to me but never sat at a table with me. They called only at our back door and occupied the rear seats of the bus. They had their own churches and schools. To me this all seemed entirely rational and proper.

Habits thus acquired are not easily discarded. Even now it is only righteous indignation that makes me vote Republican; and when kind words about New England slip through my lips, I take secret pride in my magnanimity. Yes, and to this day I never pass a Sherman monument without thumbing my nose at it.

As for the interracial mores, I must confess that I am conventional—at least, ostensibly. I dance only with Nordics,

Alpines, Mediterraneans, and mixtures of these three. And I have no doubt that the man my daughter marries, whatever be his intellectual and moral qualifications, will have the acceptable amount of pigment in his epidermis.

My prejudices, however, do not lead to violence. Lynching I condemn; the persecution of Jews I deplore; and recent immigrants and their children, I know full well, are not one whit more iniquitous than the Founding Fathers. Ku Klux Klans, Coughlins, and Winrods get no support from me.

But I am no reformer. The role of the crusader has never won me over. I admire martyrs and am often tempted to envy them their bliss; but I doubt that I shall ever emulate them. When in Rome I try to do as the Romans; and I appreciate similar efforts on their part. This attitude I attribute to the study of anthropology, but the cause may be glandular. I don't know. Call me conservative, Tory, reactionary, or what you will. But not radical.

Creeds and etiquette, however, are quite different things. Toward the latter my policy is usually one of conformity, but toward the former I am disposed to be critical and rebellious. Before I had graduated from short pants I had played havoc with the Apostles' Creed, much to the consternation of aunts, uncles, and parents. My faith in the racial creed remained unshaken much longer, until college professors, books,

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and several years' residence abroad combined to make me skeptical. As a consequence, in place of the racial creed acquired in my youth, I now hold to a new one:

First, our popular orthodox ideas about race are no better than superstitions. They were born, not of cool, scientific thinking, but were smuggled into our heritage to justify exploitation, to protect privilege, to arouse nationalism, or to cover ignorance.

Second, there are no fundamental differences between the various races.

And third, there is no such thing as a race in the first place.

Allow me, by way of novelty, to discuss these points in reverse order.

First, then, races are fictions—the modern counterparts of witches, ghosts, and goblins—existing only in our minds, although we commonly treat them as though they were real, objective entities. But, you are probably saying, do we not see them with our eyes? Does not everyone know to which race he belongs? Well, so did our ancestors actually see witches and ghosts, and there were many who even confessed that they were witches. The five senses are by no means infallible.

This belief that races are real things is betrayed in the questions one frequently hears. How many races are there? To which race do the Polynesians belong? To which the Hindus? As well to ask, How many slices are there in a pie? Two, four, six; it all depends. Or this, On which shelf of a bookcase should one put *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*? The assignment of people to races, like the carving of a pie or the cataloging of books, is an arbitrary affair, depending on the whim of the carver, the criteria chosen, the purpose of the classification.

The fact of the matter is that no two people are exactly alike. We differ in a

great variety of ways. There are Republicans and Democrats; monogamists and polygamists; theists, atheists, and agnostics; liberals, radicals, and conservatives; idiots and geniuses. We are tall, short, fat, and skinny. Some are musical, some not. Noses are straight, concave, convex, and sinuous. Some have thick lips, some thin. Some have a good deal of pigment in the skin, others less.

Now some of these differences are obviously hereditary, others acquired, and many hard to determine. Also, some of them seem important, while others are incidental. Except for our prejudices, we should probably agree that such things as intelligence, health, and temperament are important differences, but that it matters not whether the nose is straight or aquiline, whether the hair is curly or wavy. But suppose the hair is kinky? Suppose the nose is broad and flat? Very important indeed, as far as the status of the individual is concerned; more important even than intelligence and temperament. Quite so; but only because we have arbitrarily attached social significance to these biological trivia.

The word race involves some of these differences. But not all of them. At least, it shouldn't. Yet we commonly hear almost any kind of group designated a race. There is the Anglo-Saxon race, the Slavic race, the French, the Latin, the Aryan, the Jewish, Irish, Gypsy, and Teutonic. Now these names represent quite different kinds of aggregates of people; but the elusive word race, which means almost anything, fits them all. Thus, in popular use, the word seems to refer to a group of people having anything at all in common, hereditary or acquired, biological or social. And a word that becomes so promiscuous needs to be punished—perhaps even ostracized.

If we keep it, however—and we probably shall—we should restrict its use to

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large groups of people who have in common, more or less, certain hereditary, non-adaptive, physical features. That would rule out as criteria of race such things as language, religion, politics, and nationality. But what about height, weight, baldness, and epilepsy? We had better rule them out too; for, although they are somewhat hereditary, they would give us too much trouble and we have troubles enough as it is. That leaves as criteria such things as head-form, the eyes, the shape of the nose, the color of the skin, the thickness of the lips, the type of hair.

Now if Nature had not jumbled our precious criteria, the problem of constructing racial pigeon-holes would not be so difficult. But Nature is impish, and she has accordingly put curly hair on the chocolate-skinned Australian, wavy hair on the black Veddha, and abundant hair on the slant-eyed Ainu. She has blessed the Nordic with the accolade of dolichocephaly, and then, Puck-like, turned around and given it to the Negro.

But that is only half of the story. What about the value of these criteria? Which is most important? Which next? If one is to classify anything, one must be consistent and not flit from one criterion to another. That is easier said than done, when one is dealing with races. Which is most important? Skin color, hair, the nose, or the skull? To be perfectly honest about it, none of them is important. They are all secondary. But we must decide which of these empty things is least empty. We must arrange them in some order—empty, emptier, emptiest.

That is precisely what the scientists have never been able to do; and for that reason hardly two of them agree as to the number and composition of the races. Thus one scholar makes an elaborate classification of twenty-nine races; another tells us there are six; Huxley gives us four; Kroeber, three; Goldenweiser, five; and

Boas inclines to two, while his colleague, Linton, says there are twelve or fifteen. Even my dullest students sometimes note this apparent contradiction.

There is no such thing as a race. Perhaps I should now qualify that sweeping statement. I wish, just for a moment, that I could speak the language of philosophy. What I want to say is that races are not the kind of things that people think they are. They are not entities, but arbitrary, man-made categories. In matters of metaphysics I confess I am naive. In my innocence I take it that some things, such as the Empire State Building, are very, very real; that the Democratic Party and the Methodist Church are also real, although there is a difference; but that such things as introverts, liberals, extroverts, and morons are subjective, descriptive categories. We have constructed these pigeon-holes to suit our purposes. Races belong to this last type of reality. We have made them ourselves, for one reason or another; and in the making of them we have used the convenient but inconsequential fact that people have different kinds of hair, eyes, and complexions.

The second article of my faith is that there are no important differences between these arbitrary groups that we call races; that is, no innate differences in intelligence, temperament, physiology, artistic abilities, and the like.

Popular opinion, of course, holds that races and nationalities do by nature differ greatly. Englishmen are taciturn, Negroes musical, Italians volatile, Russians phlegmatic, Chinese passive, Hindus mystical, Jews aggressive, Indians stolid, and Irishmen witty.

Most of these impressionistic characterizations can be dismissed as so much piffle. When one comes to know the members of another race, group, or nation, one realizes the inadequacy of such generaliza-



tions. I used to believe that Scotchmen were rough, jolly, and thrifty—a nation of Harry Lauders. But after living among them for a while, I am at a loss to find any adjective that is applicable. My Scottish acquaintances run the whole gamut of personality types—from toppers to tee-totalers, from prigs to profligates, from sapheads to scholars. Such truth as there is in these broad characterizations of people can be adequately explained in terms of their culture, without resorting to such myths as “the national mind” or “the soul qualities of the race.”

In this scientific age we insist that our prejudices be fortified with facts and figures, and we have accordingly produced a mass of data to prove we are the chosen people. The arguments usually run along these lines: (1) some races have larger brains than others; (2) some produce more geniuses than others; (3) history and cultural achievements prove the superiority of certain races; and (4) intelligence tests clinch the debate for our side.

Now if these arguments are valid, they prove also that men are superior to women. Their brains are larger, they have given us more geniuses, and historically they have achieved more. As much as I should like, however, to believe that the male is God's chosen sex, I must confess that these reasons leave me unconvinced. About all they prove is that the men have written more books.

In the matter of race, then, bear in mind that we have made the tests, using the paraphernalia of our culture; we have decided who the geniuses are; and we have set up the criteria for judging backwardness and progressiveness, invariably choosing those things in which we excel. Not only that, but we have insisted that the decision be made at this very moment, when we seem to be in the lead. Now in poker, if one persists in stacking the cards and quitting the game when he is in the

lead, he deserves to be shot. In debate should the standards of sportsmanship be lower?

Anyone familiar with history knows that culture has a way of arising, accumulating, and spreading over the world with a complete and serene indifference to such matters as skin color and nose width. Our own civilization is a patchwork of elements gathered from every corner of the earth and handed down from the remote past. Most of us are only passive carriers of the culture we have inherited; it is the rare individual who makes any contribution to the social heritage. It is as absurd, therefore, for Americans or Englishmen or Caucasians to use their culture as evidence for their superiority as for Barbara Hutton to insist that the size of her bank roll proves her a financial genius.

The third doctrine of my creed concerns the function of our racial superstition, which, I maintain, is chiefly masquerade, camouflage, and rationalization.

One must admit, however, that, fiction though it be, it has done its job well. Hitler himself has said, “I know perfectly well—just as well as these tremendously clever intellectuals—that there is no such thing as race. But I, as a politician, need a conception which enables the order which has hitherto existed to be abolished; and for this purpose the conception of race serves me well.” And Mussolini, echoing these sentiments, said, “Race is a feeling, not a reality; ninety-five per cent, at least, is a feeling.”

A glance at the history of the word “race” will throw some light upon its function. Its actual origin is disputed by etymologists; but it did enter the western European languages late, coming into the English from the French in the 16th century, and into the German in the 18th. Originally the word was used to denote the descendants of a single person as, for

## COMMON GROUND

example, the race of Abraham. In short, race was a word associated with the institution of the family. Now the family is one of man's oldest institutions, and a great deal of sentiment and loyalty has grown up around it. Nations, on the contrary, are very recent, not so firmly planted in our social heritage. The racial myth accordingly represents the effort to transfer to the nation the feeling and loyalty long associated with the family.

Human groups are not like herds of cattle or flocks of birds, which are held together by their gregarious instinct. People must be united by more subtle bonds—common language, a common body of traditions, symbols such as flags and kings, and perhaps best of all a common enemy. With all of these, however, it is no easy task to mold a mass of human beings into a single body. Small wonder, then, that the race myth—the superstition that a great nation of people is really one big family, with a common ancestor, with the same blood in their veins—small wonder that such an idea, coming just at the time when nationalism was arising, should be taken up so eagerly.

Not only did the race fiction fit beautifully into the budding nationalism of the period, but it was equally useful in another connection. Europeans, at the time, were going abroad conquering native peoples, robbing, slaughtering, and enslaving them. They were not satisfied merely to accept their dominance as a fact and let it go at that. From the very first they sought to rationalize and justify their conduct. Thus the Spanish had their apologists, who conveniently discovered that the Indians were really not human beings at all, but were another "race," descended from some pair other than Adam and Eve. There were other good "reasons" for enslavement, too—theological, Biblical, and pseudo-scientific. And these spread rapidly from one European nation to another, for some-

thing was desperately needed to soothe the white man's conscience.

Race has been a useful tool, not only in bolstering nationalism and in justifying our sins, but in covering our ignorance as well. Note how often in music, art, and literature, when one is at a loss to account for some strange effect, the vague myth of race is resorted to. A biographer, for example, concludes that President Roosevelt's stubbornness is due to the Dutch blood in his veins; a critic informs us that the peculiar qualities of Tschaikovsky's music are the manifestations of his Russian race; and a military expert explains the bombing of Honolulu as a consequence of the "strong strain of Malay blood in the Japanese race." And thus the authorities would have us credit them with keen biological insight.

Indeed, no other character in fiction has played so many roles, and with such perfection.

It has not been my purpose here to criticize, or to overthrow, our social structure. As a sociologist, I realize how deep-rooted are the institutions and mores of a people, and how difficult it is to try to alter them. I know, too, the futility of simple and sentimental panaceas.

The answer I do not know. I even doubt such problems have "solutions," as problems do in mathematics.

We do not "solve" racial problems—we move in directions. And there are only two alternatives. One leads to persecution, hatred, and bestiality. The other is the one I believe we Americans have slowly but hesitantly trod—the path of acceptance, co-operation, and democracy.

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# YOU LIKE? YOU HAVE!

LETA BROWNE

I've got a job—at last! Teaching English to the foreign-born, in a bleak, dismal town miles away from Chicago.

This afternoon was a nightmare. Thirty old men and women just sitting there looking at me expectantly. I passed out the enrollment cards.

"After name write your name—after address give your street and number—after nationality put the name of the country you came from—fill in the spaces after age, how long in this country, have first papers been filed, and so on."

A gray-haired woman eyed her card at arm's length as though she doubted its reality. I turned it rightside up.

"Your name goes here," I said, running my finger along the first line.

She looked at me suspiciously.

"What is your name?" I asked.

No answer. Just a deep frown of doubt.

A man sitting nearby explained patiently, "Mrs. Marinoni no understand much English."

I remembered my teaching instructions. Speak only English in class. I said, "Nome—scribe—aqui!"

"Me no scribe," she imparted with a cheerful smile.

So I tried to fill out her card with information from her friends. Then I asked Mrs. Berlusconi if she could write. She chuckled sympathetically and answered, "You no worry, Teach! You write! Me tell you everything!"

Only two could remember their house numbers. Only a few could write their

names. And such names! I know I made a mess of them, but I finally collected the cards and went weakly to the front of the room.

There I pointed to the oversized alphabet hanging on the blackboard and said, reading the name on the top card, "Mr. Guffanti, do you know these letters?"

Dead silence. I looked at the card again. Twenty-eight years in this country. I searched the room for a Guffanti-looking face.

Finally a wrinkled old man answered. "Me no read, Teach. No write. No time learn read. Now learn. You teach." He waited for me to teach.

Tonight was even worse. Thirty new faces, tired and drawn. Thirty pairs of eyes calmly focused on the new Teach.

More men this time. Men with black fingernails and workstained clothes. Recurrent waves of garlic and wine surged around me. As I opened all the windows I remembered one of the questions I had been asked when interviewed for this job. "Would you dance with these men if they asked you to, at our school parties?" Then it had been easy to say "Of course!"

Again I explained the cards. Again I helped each one fill his out.

I had discovered a fine large picture to hold up.

"This is a carrot—this is a turnip—this is a garden—" (and this is a teacher failing at a job as she had failed at marriage).

Some of them knew the carrot, but not

one could tell the English name of the lowly turnip.

I've dragged myself back to this sooty hotel room. Here I am—an honor student from the University—teaching the peasant class of Europe how to hold a pencil. How to read cat and dog, so they can be



future citizens. What kind of citizens—The kind we want?

The faces, names, and odors swim around me. My bed is like a rock; I can't go to sleep.

I can actually connect a good many faces with the right names. I wonder why these people all came to this country. Are they glad they came?

Yesterday the Director of Americanization called me to the office.

"Here it is," I thought.

"You know," she began, pleasantly, "I want you to help these people to speak better English, not only to read and write. When they come to me for the Constitution, I would like to be able to understand them. Drill on the little words. Don't let them say 'Me gotta job,' or 'My son, she good boy.' I haven't time for that in my room. It's all I can do to teach them the Constitution."

I nodded and, saluting mentally, went back to my room.

We were nicely started on the reading lesson when Mrs. Marinoni hustled in and quietly sat down. I hadn't noticed before how pretty she is, gray hair and all.

"Me sorry, Teach," she whispered. "Finish wash, come school. No time eat. Honest to God."

I nodded and went on with the lesson.

Tony Reese, recently from Portugal, was already asleep in a rear seat. I lowered my voice. He gets up at three every morning to work on a dairy farm.

Old Mr. Guffanti struggled with the alphabet. When I reached his seat, he beamed up at me.

"You come dinner my house sometime?" he whispered confidentially. Well, I had known this was to be part of my job. We had a "socialized" program.

These people are a constant source of surprise. I noticed Mrs. Gonsales this afternoon, during our talking period. With her hands folded quietly in her lap and those calm black eyes looking straight into mine, she was a picture of repose. I wondered, looking at her, if I could acquire such poise.

I held up a large picture of happy children.

"Mrs. Gonsales, do you know what these are?"

What a crazy way to put my question. Naturally she knew what they were.

"I mean—what are these, in English?"

That was bad, too. I must say the English word before I show the picture. Well, it was too late now.

"Children," I said. "In English, children. Boys and girls."

"Oh—si—si—I"—she paused—"I—eight."

"You have eight children?" I asked.

"Si—eight. I—have—eight." She smiled proudly.

So she has eight. And I lie awake over

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my one son who prefers to live with his father.

Yesterday I was called to the office again. How does she know I'm failing? She never visits my room, thank heaven!

"You may not know it," she began, "but you are an unusually serious woman. Now these people learn more if they feel happy. They don't have to come to school, you know. They'll only come if they like you. You might even sing simple songs with them. It's an ideal way to teach a language. Put pep into your work. Inject a spirit of gaiety into your lessons."

I implied that I would be a fount of cheer and left.

Mrs. Grimoldi breezed into the classroom.

"Buon giorno, Senora Maestra," she called from the doorway.

"Buon giorno, Senora Grimoldi," I answered. Only English in class.

She approached the desk, made a stiff little curtsy, and handed me a corsage.

"From mine garden," she said proudly.

It was made up of many kinds of lovely little flowers, the stems tied with thread and covered with waxed paper. A pin had been stuck through the paper. I immediately fastened the bouquet on my dress and tried to thank her.

"Oh," she answered, "that nothing. Nothing! Me like you."

She couldn't know how grateful I was.

Today's lesson was on locks and keys. I showed the class my keys, locked the door, unlocked it, explaining slowly just what I was doing. Finally I wrote the word keys on the board. Then I spoke to Mr. Guffanti.

"Do you know what keys means?"

His response was quick and serious.

"Si—si—I keez my wife."

When the class stopped laughing, I explained it all again to Mr. Guffanti.

Then he laughed harder than any of the others. What a wonderful joke!

Later on we were talking about our country. Pale little Mrs. Penutti sat in a front seat, straining to understand my words.

"Mrs. Penutti, do you know the capital of the United States?"

She beamed.

"Si—Washington, C.O.D."

When she understood her mistake, she enjoyed it heartily.

"Oh—oh," she exclaimed, touching her forehead, "testa dura, testa dura."

Yesterday I chose a lesson on silkworms. It had such nice large pictures.

First I tried to explain what a worm was. Talk only English. I faced a sea of incomprehension.

Then I held up the pictures. The class came to life. Some of the women made wry faces, nodding vigorously. Little Mrs. Penutti spoke up.

"Oh—" she exclaimed. "Baco da seta. Bad smell."

"But how do you know about this worm?"

"Me work ten year—old country—con baco da seta. Eight year old, I start."

"For all day?"

"Si. Twelve hour day, six day in week."

"But when you were eight years old," I asked, "twelve hours a day, six days a week?"

Several women assured me it was true. They had done the same.

The greatest burden of my eighth year had been half an hour's daily practicing on the grand piano.

This afternoon Mrs. Berlusconi asked me to visit her. I went reluctantly straight from school; I would have preferred to rest before the evening session.

She welcomed me from her garden, and I admired her beautiful large poinsettias.



## COMMON GROUND

"You like?" she asked. "You have."

She picked all the best ones for me.

"Come in house," she said leading the way to the kitchen door.

We sat down at a big table in the warm clean room.

"You like wine?" she asked hesitantly.

"Thank you, a little."

She took a bottle from the shelf.

"Me get this down cellar for you. Very old."

As I sipped it, I could well believe her. It was delicious. We could hear a radio going, and I said something about it.

"My boy listen. Me no listen radio. Me know enough 'bout war. Plenty!" She shook her head.

"Were you in the old country in the last war?"

"Si. Have big farm. Husband go. Pushed in big car, raining, no top—pushed so tight no can sit down. Like animal. Me work farm and keep five babies. Government take half all I can grow."

"How long was your husband away?"

"Three year. Come back same way. Pushed off car, no can stand. Sick all time since. Me no listen radio now."

I said nothing.

She went to a drawer and took out some towels and napkins.

"Me make these," she said. "Old country, little girl."

They were beautifully woven of coarse linen.

"Do all. Plant seed, make thread, make stuff, everything. Daughter say old-fashioned. No want." She smiled ruefully.

"But they're beautiful," I exclaimed. "You can't get this kind of thing any more. I think they're wonderful."

Her face lit with pleasure.

"You like? I keep for daughter, she no want. You want, you keep."

If I wanted them! I felt as though I had been offered a piece of eternity.

Dinner at Mr. Guffanti's tonight. I wore my new dress.

As I approached his house, I saw him at the far end of the garden, surrounded by children and flowers. He heard the gate click and looked up.

"Come in, come in," he smiled, starting toward me. "Kids, this Teach."

The two little girls and the small boy eyed me curiously and then scurried away. Mr. Guffanti laughed.

"My grandchildren," he informed me with pride. We walked toward the kitchen door.

"Come in," he said. "Dinner ready. Eat now."

The large, bright room was filled with intriguing aromas. Mr. Guffanti called to a large woman who stood at the stove.

"Mama, here Teach."

The woman turned. She smiled—her



mouth, her eyes, her whole motherly self smiled a welcome.

"How do you do," I said, putting out my hand.

She took it, still with that gracious smile—and said nothing.

Mr. Guffanti patted her on the shoulder.

"Povera mama—no speak English. Have ten kids, no go school yet. Go next year sure."

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"I hope she will," I said, and I meant it.

She smiled at her husband—a special sort of secret smile—and turned to the pots of food.

All other eyes were focused on me. Friendly eyes, wanting me to feel at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Guffanti sat close to each other during the meal. At times they would stop eating, look at each other, and smile. They obviously shared a profound comradeship.

Food and wine were pressed upon me. I ate too much before the meal was well started. But it was certainly good food. There was a spicy, fragrant seasoning in the chicken. I turned to one of the older girls and asked how it had been prepared.

She smiled. "That's probably the rosemary you like."

After dinner we all went to the small front room. It was stuffy and crowded, but I didn't care. One son got his accordion, another his guitar. Mr. Guffanti asked me to dance. A daughter-in-law told me about the old folks. Mrs. Guffanti sat and smiled at me. Then one of the little boys came in and gave me a large bunch of freshly-picked rosemary.

An air of contentment flooded the room. It seemed to pour into me, smooth-

ing ragged edges, healing deep hurts. When I finally forced myself to leave, I was happier than I had been for years.

Yesterday my classes discovered I was spending the Christmas holidays in Chicago. I've been offered a job there next year. In a regular high school, with a better salary. I can live near my brothers, who write that I must certainly take it.

I woke up at four this morning in a mood of deep depression. I'm no good at this kind of work. I'd better take the job in Chicago.

Finally I dressed, finished packing, and started down the block to the station. It was raining hard. I was alone on the street—and alone in the world. I was even half an hour early for my six-o'clock train and must sit in the dreary station with my dark thoughts.

I opened the door and started inside—and suddenly stopped. Facing me, with broad smiles and friendly eyes, stood a large group of my pupils.

When I finally boarded the train, loaded with flowers and gifts, my step was light.

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*Leta Browne is a native westerner and graduate of the University of California.*

*The illustrations are by Kurt Werth.*

## MORALE BEGINS AT SCHOOL

MARIE SYRKIN

WHEN I entered my classroom the morning after Pearl Harbor, I was worried. I teach in a large New York high school where isolationist sentiment has been strong. My students are of predominantly Italian and Irish backgrounds, with a good sprinkling of Slav, Greek, German, and whatever else goes to make up America. I know the inevitable tensions and conflicts at work in this conglomerate, and I know also how shrewdly these have been exploited by pro-Axis elements. Each week of the past two years has brought its knowledge, often painful and surprising. There was the day when two Italian American boys objected to a poetic reference to Thermopylae because at that moment Greece was driving back the Italian invader and the heroism of even classical Hellas was distasteful. "That's propaganda," Spallarzoni said. There was the day when the girl from Yorkville justified Nazi aggression with the blunt Hitlerite credo: "If they are stronger, why not?" There was the time when everyone in school was asked to sign a pledge affirming his loyalty to American democratic institutions and a couple of boys looked at me sullenly and said: "That's war-mongering," and were only reassured by a word-by-word study of the text. It was not hard to guess from what source this suspicion had been fed.

But apparently I had not known my boys so well after all. The morning after Pearl Harbor I didn't have to worry about the subversive organizations in the land. In their whole-hearted simple patriotism

my youngsters sounded like the theme song of "Americans All."

This miracle was apparently repeated the country over. The boys at camp, whose anaemic morale had been the subject of doleful analysis, got into stride. The solid citizen was "fighting mad." All those caught too far out on the isolationist limb leaped agilely onto the nearest flag-pole and waved the Stars and Stripes. My older boys rushed to join the Marines.

One does not have to be an acute psychologist, however, to realize that whatever corrosive forces were at work before the Japanese attack have not vanished into air. It would be folly to assume that the doubts, the indifference, even the occasional downright hostility to democratic ideals observable in a sector of our youth had been neutralized overnight. The reaction to America's entry into the war was spontaneous and vigorous, as that of any healthy organism under attack, but this provides no guarantee that the reaction will be sustained if the same vitiating factors resume their influence.

For a comprehensive view of the problems involved, one must go to the high school. Only a small percentage of American youth enters the colleges, but a very large proportion receives at least a partial high school education. Furthermore, particularly in a large urban school with its variety of national strains, its fundamental democracy which embraces every potential citizen of the land no matter how meager his natural endowments, how low

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or high his IQ, how flimsy his prospect of achievement, one gets more clearly than anywhere else a glimpse of what constitutes America. It is here we learn firsthand what ingredients go into the "melting pot," what are the mechanics of the fusing process. Here also we note how great or small is the resistance of the American boy or girl to fascist infection. Has constant exposure to the tenets of the democratic faith provided a natural immunity against totalitarian bacilli? If not, why not? In this hour of our history, there are few more challenging problems before the country.

One can safely hazard the observation that so far democracy has not bred its zealots, as Communism and fascism have bred theirs. The passion of American youth for democracy is strictly under control. This temperance might, under ordinary circumstances, be viewed as wholly admirable, but in a period of clashing world concepts fanatical faith must be matched if not by fanaticism at least by equal fierceness of devotion. Otherwise the will to endure danger and disaster for a long period will be lacking. Above all, the absence of such devotion makes room for the most dangerous fifth column that can arise in our midst—the "what does it matter" mood.

It has been the fashion to place responsibility for the apathy of our youth on the debunking mania of the post-war years. In a measure this is true. We have probed the weaknesses of our national heroes and national institutions until our boys and girls are supposed to be free of illusions: they see a thing straight. But in our zeal to dispel all hokum and bathos, we have too often obliterated the halo even when the halo was pragmatically more authentic than the clay. One year I discovered that no one in a third-term English class knew of Joan of Arc. When I told the story of the Maid, one boy said,

"This isn't true, is it?" I assured him Joan was an historical figure. He sat down, shaking his head. "That's applesauce," he said. "That's propaganda," he would have said a few years later. He could not perceive the reality of the heroic, the noble, the grandiosely disinterested. He had been thoroughly debunked. And he was, in his way, as blind as his predecessor of a previous generation—the victim of 19th century romanticism—who saw the universe bathed in sweetness and light.

The debunking mania has resulted in an equally uncritical cynicism concerning every aspect of our national life. If the class writes a composition on "Why I Love America" or "What Democracy Means to Me," all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are rattled off smoothly and pronounced invaluable. But less formal classroom discussions quickly reveal how mechanical the enumeration of democratic privileges has been. Behind the safe generalities of the composition lurks a terrifying distrust of the Government: every politician is crooked, but his crookedness is not specially reprehensible. Everyone is out for himself, and graft is as natural a phenomenon as breathing. The boy who recites the assorted freedoms of democracy by rote views the notion that political honesty and idealism are part of the democratic process as hilarious. That is hokum for assembly speeches.

Naturally, previous to December 7, the same mechanical cynicism extended to all the issues raised by the war and the possibilities of American involvement. War was something concocted by the "munitions makers." Even the least intellectual of my pupils, boys and girls who had not had even an elementary course in European history, had assimilated the jargon of the time. They announced categorically that the war was caused not by the aggressive designs of the Axis but by the Versailles Treaty.

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Any attempt before Pearl Harbor to define present issues in terms of principle aroused the same derision as the discredited slogans of the last war—"making the world safe for democracy," etc. The average boy in my class felt the "interests" were cooking something up and he would be caught in the mess. "They'll get me," was his feeling. He would go to camp and the battle-front, not because he believed he was participating in a struggle that concerned him but because he was a helpless victim, as his father before him. Only this time, he would go to be slaughtered "clear-eyed." The June before December 7, we had oral recitations. A good-looking, brawny lad of seventeen spoke on "What to do with your summer vacation." He ended his advice with the injunction: "Have a good time, boys. It's your last vacation." I asked the class what he meant. They said simply: "The war will get us." It was hard to look without emotion at these future saviors of democracy—so young, so resigned, and so unbelieving.

One may well ask why the democratic school, in which the formative and impressionable years of childhood and adolescence were spent, had not succeeded in leaving a greater impress upon the spirit of the student body. The specific failure of the school, apart from the general lassitude of the post-war years, can be traced to the deliberately passive role it chose to play. There is no more dreaded phrase in the teacher's lexicon than "to indoctrinate." Opinion is sacrosanct by virtue of being opinion. "That's my opinion" or "That's what I think" are unanswerable arguments, frequently safe from the challenge of logic or truth, and certainly safe from the intrusion of the teacher's views. Theoretically, light should emerge from the fair give-and-take of debate, but the results of this careful nursing

of fledgling thought are sometimes weird. I remember one occasion when an essay dealt with astronomical data. One boy, apparently nonplused by the notion that the earth was traveling toward the constellation Lyra at a staggering speed, announced, "I don't believe that." When I asked the class whether the dissident was in a position to question information about the solar system, a number of boys upheld him. "This is a free country. He can believe what he likes." This extraordinary interpretation of freedom of thought has some less amusing corollaries. Occasionally a class has had an outspoken fascist in its midst, sometimes an obviously disciplined member of the Bund, well-drilled in the Hitler faith, or a disciple of one of our native outfits with an equally unmistakable line. What startles me is not the appearance of such a type but the good-humored "tolerance" of the class. "If he likes Hitler, why not? It's a free country."

About two years ago, the New York Board of Education, aware of the dangers of anti-democratic propaganda in the huge ethnic groups of the city, started a "tolerance" program. The schools were to make a definite effort to stem the growing tide of imported prejudices, to discuss the subject with students. When I assigned a composition on "The Meaning of Tolerance," the majority wrote all that might be desired, but a few struck the inevitable note: "Why must we be tolerant? This is a free country. We have the right to be intolerant." We may assume the vocal few were spokesmen for more numerous silent backers.

Even within the last two years, when schools have become more aware of the menace threatening fundamental American concepts, the steps taken to inculcate a genuine love and comprehension of democracy have been far from adequate. We have been satisfied with safe platitudes



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about the beauties of democracy, with tableaux of the Pilgrims, Abraham Lincoln, and the Statue of Liberty. The Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights are posted on all available wall space. We assume the pupils will make the necessary deductions and be prepared to meet the intellectual challenge of the present reinforced by the sonorous phrases of the Founding Fathers. Rarely do we come to grips with an actual situation because that might be "controversial" or cause unpleasantness.

The Christian Front trial in which some high school boys were involved took place in the midst of this "tolerance program." Obviously here was ideal illustrative material, exciting and immediate. But I know of a teacher who was requested not to discuss the activities of the Christian Front or Father Coughlin as it might give offense to some one in the class. This, at a moment when we were presumably straining every effort to fight fascist attempts to sow bigotry and discord in our midst.

Children are not subtle: they do not understand innuendos. We may condition them to proper responses when they hear words like "democracy" or "patriotism," but these words sound just as persuasive and attractive on the lips of any rabble-rouser. If we wish our youth, particularly our average boys and girls who have no special intellectual equipment for grappling with the intricacies of propaganda analysis, to understand who is foe and who is friend, we must be direct and unambiguous in our designations. Otherwise the same boy who earnestly applauds the Gettysburg Address in the school assembly will join the Christian Front or the Silver Shirts and be unaware of any conflict between the two acts.

Little reliance can be placed on implied analogy or the pupil's unaided deductive powers. Once I asked a class to explain

"Stone walls do not a prison make." The headlines were full of one of Ghandi's visits to jail, and I faintly hoped some one would mention the Indian leader. I asked in all innocence, "Who today is freer spiritually in prison than outside?" And the class answered, "Al Capone." They were not joking. They explained that "outside" Al Capone might be "bumped off." On another occasion, I was discussing Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, countrymen" speech, as a perfect example of demagoguery—the "Brutus is an honorable man" section—and I asked, "Do you know of an orator like Antony who claims to be full of goodwill toward a group but who actually arouses the reverse?" Coughlin was issuing weekly anti-Semitic blasts over the radio, and I expected some one would see the parallel. But the class, without malice or evil intent, happily answered: "Roosevelt."

Today the school system of our democracy obviously has a greater task than ever before. It must be a bulwark for the young entrusted to its care. Hitler and his satellites propose to make capital out of the existence of divergent national strains in our body. Their propaganda is geared to take advantage of every possible disruptive factor, to strengthen the tug of every old attachment. Already Social Justice, though giving lip service to loyalty, is revamping its wares for the same ends as before. Already in the classroom I have heard one ominous justification of the Japanese attack on America which bears an alarming resemblance to the Coughlinist propaganda. The pro-Axis anti-democratic forces have retired only temporarily. They are already beginning to creep out of their holes. If it is their dubious democratic privilege to taint the air with treason and defeatism, it is surely the democratic duty of our schools to take the necessary therapeutic measures. This can be done

## COMMON GROUND

only by plain speaking, without equivocation. The schools of a democracy must assume the authority to condemn and expose all subversive forces gnawing at its structure. If we continue to dread the actual, the controversial, we will be asphyxiated by our own gentility.

Nor can the school be content with merely a defensive role. Its chief function must be positive. The tendency of modern education has been to cast the spotlight on the flaws in our institutions. While stressing our defeats, we have taken our successes for granted. Admittedly it would be no service to the democratic cause if we attempted to gloss over such signal failures as the plight of the sharecroppers or Jim Crowism, but we must make certain that the picture is presented whole, that the immense positive achievements and potentialities of democracy receive their fitting and dramatic emphasis. Too often we have let the villain crowd the hero off the stage. It is time to get the whole cast back; otherwise we must not be surprised if the audience thinks the play not worth the price.

The American Dream is vivid enough in any age to fire the imagination of youth, but particularly in a period when its validity is attacked with growing ferocity. The familiar democratic slogans can be re-endowed with their original chal-

lenging significance if we interpret them anew in concrete terms. Schools which have pupils of varying social and ethnic backgrounds are ideally situated to teach the meaning of racial and religious equality by reference to actual national groups and their particular contributions to the American pattern. Many schools have instituted stimulating projects through which pupils learn fact not fable about the folkways of various American strains, but some schools still follow a hush-hush policy as though the mention of contemporary Jewish, Italian, Polish, or Negro Americans were indelicate. Through their actual contacts with each other we must help our boys and girls feel that the great vision of a land "with liberty and justice for all" is a goal in which all of them share in equal terms.

By and large, our young folks have sound and healthy instincts. Pearl Harbor showed that. But they should be given a chance. We owe them prophylactics against mental as well as physical infection. Above all, we owe them the creation of a living faith in a cause for which we ask them to be prepared to die.

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*Marie Syrkin is already familiar to readers of COMMON GROUND as author of two previous articles in its pages.*

DEAR MR. ADAMIC —

MARGERY HARVILLE

I HAVE just finished "Two Way Passage" and I like it very much.

It is very interesting to see how other people feel about their old country. Most of my ancestors came over about three hundred years ago, soon after the Mayflower or a bit later. The very latest on both sides came over before a hundred years ago but that was the very latest. My main background is British and we have lost contact with all our relatives back there.

The Japanese here are treated pretty bad at school. They are Sakae and Yoshio and Yoshio has a little brother named Toshio. Since the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor they have been pretty mean to them. I think I told you before about Sakae. Now that I know about Yoshio and Toshio I'll tell you what I know about them. Yoshio told me about it just after the United States went to war with Japan.

His parents were born in Japan. They came over here and went back quite a lot. I forget how many of the children were born over here and how many were born over there. He told me that he has a brother of about 17 in Japan and two other brothers besides Toshio here in the United States and one baby sister. He told me he has never been to Japan.

At school these days they aren't treating them at all well. They just don't play with them or talk to them at all. They are quite lonely.

Mother lets us go down to play with them once in a while. It was two days after Pearl Harbor was bombed we (that

is my brother who is 7 and I) played with Yoshio and it was then that he told me about himself. I don't know who they want to win the war but I know they are very confused.

Last year there was a boy in my room (this year he is in my sister's room) whose mother and father were born in Hungary. He has been in this school four years. His mother brought in some Hungarian cakes etc. for the children in that room. She hadn't even been asked to—she just did it. My sister said they were very good. Last year he tried to tell some of the stories his mother told him about her trip to this country. One time we were talking about Mermaids. He said—I think he believes it—that his mother saw a real one when she came over. Every one was mean to him the rest of the day. Another time last year he brought a Hungarian record for the teacher to play. It was lovely. He said that it was the very one that was played when his mother and father were married. At the end of last year he said that his father had fought in the last war in the Austrian army. "How awful," said every one. It is pretty bad as he is the only Hungarian (He was born in this country and has never been there) in this school. He is in the sixth grade.

(I am in the seventh grade this year and I've had my twelfth birthday since last July when I wrote. In our school we have all eight grades and kindergarten.)

In our school there are a lot more than those I've mentioned: Mexicans, Negroes, Maltese, Italian, German-Jewish, Indian,

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also the Chinese, Japanese-Hawaiian, Japanese, Hungarian; beside "old stock" Americans.

I was wondering about something. I write a girl who lives in Glasgow, Scotland and in one of our letters she was telling me what she wants to be when she grows up. She told me that she wants to be a Language teacher. Besides French and Latin which she is taking now she said that she is going to take German. Gosh, if I told any of my school friends I was going to take German there would be nothing left of me. Because just the beginning of the school year a couple of us were saying what few words we had learned and saying "Ja" and "Nein" or "Ich bin" or some easy stuff like that. The children said they were going to tell the teacher or something. But they like to have us try other languages. In fact the principal even tries to talk in German and explain the language. My teacher who took German in school tells us some when we ask him ("We" is a couple of boys and I) he tells us words. But there are still those who have a fit and they aren't the teachers.

Also since "Pearl Harbor" there were two incidents at school. In our music book (In California the text books belong to the state) there is the Japanese National Anthem in the music book. They threat-

ened to tear it out—some one started to—till he [the principal] had to tell them if he saw page 22 out of the book some one would be in serious trouble.

We are studying Europe and some times in relation to the war we go off to Japan and China. So today my teacher was putting the names of the rulers of those countries on the blackboard. He always writes a short history of them. So after writing "Chiang-Kai-Shek—China—Generalissimo, etc." he said, "Now Japan." He started to write down "Hiro—" when some one yells out. "Don't you dare put Japan on the board—ah—ah—ah!" Every time he'd start to why they'd have a fit. Another day some one brought in a picture of Ex-Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka so they started throwing spit wads at it and everything.

They never did that in England. At least of my pen pals (I have a lot of them) I can't imagine any one doing it.

Last year we were learning a German Folk Song. Some of them had a fit because it was German. They won't sing "Santa Lucia" or "Finiculi Finicula" because they are "Axis Songs," they say.

The teachers have tried to explain that it is Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo, etc. we're fighting but no use.

Sincerely yours . . .

## • Organizations and Their Work •

### AMERICAN COMMUNITY

FELIZIA SEYD

EIGHT o'clock on a Wednesday evening. Two urchins on Manhattan's 17th Street remove their game from the steps of the Florentine building at No. 341 to the quieter hospital entrance opposite. "Party's on!" they sigh a little enviously. Through the opening door comes the staccato rhythm of a Conga. Inside the auditorium boys and girls form into dancing couples.

Something is always going on here: Monday folk-dancing, Friday Dramatic Workshop, and other nights lectures and discussion groups of different nationality clubs. Refugees gather for their Fireside hour, and even some ten or twelve psychologists meet here once a week. Sometimes a late-comer hesitates at the desk: "Am I right? Is this International Center? I have an invitation. . . ." The pretty Chinese American clerk is quick to direct her. "Oh, yes. Italian Mothers' Club. Room 25."

The day starts early at the Center, for part of the building is reserved for resident members of the Y.W.C.A. These permanent guests—students and working girls—eat breakfast in the sunny top-floor cafeteria long before nine.

Most of them are back for their evening meal, too. Then the mood is livelier. Lisa, a Czech refugee and student at N.Y.U., boasts that she has sold her first article to a distant little magazine. Jean, who works at Saks, is planning a new evening gown. Chris has a new date and Ruth a new job. The room vibrates with talk and easy intimacy.

Of the 75 residents, about one-fifth

are foreign-born, a third are second generation, and the rest are older native stock. The atmosphere is gay and full of mutual trust, with as little class-consciousness as in the Army. Students, nurses, clerical and factory workers live side by side. Girls from Little Italy, the German American community, from Polish, Armenian, Scandinavian, or other centers are just another Betty, Aldona, Mary, or Helen. Four girls, of Peruvian, Lithuanian, Greek, and French Italian parentage share one dormitory.

Individual adjustment problems continue to exist, however.

Across the Sunday morning breakfast table I ask Aldona, "What's up? You look terribly gloomy."

"And why not!" she asks. "I've been job-hunting all week. Several employment agencies told me I'm no American because my parents were born in Lithuania. Can you beat that? I think I'll use my mother's name from now on. It has a French sound. But won't I feel like a cheat?"

"What do you think?" I ask Teresa Mancini, from an upstate small town.

"Lots of girls cover up like that," she says, and grins. "I never have to. Because I'm snub-nosed and blue-eyed, people think I'm Irish."

The girl beside her, Kitty Peck, admits her father's name is Kopacs, and that she changed it for just such reasons as Aldona's. "What good would that do me?" asks Marietta. Her Sicilian background is written all over her face.

No need to ask Betty about job difficulties. She is a music student, with



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well-to-do parents. But, coming to us with a lot of reservations on everything including Hitler, she needed a few evenings with the refugee group to set her right politically.

Gertrude, on the contrary, needed no such education. She got hers in the '30s, somewhere in Ohio. One night a group of young "storm-troopers" invaded her town's German American Club and demanded it be reformed along national-socialist lines. Then only eighteen, Gertrude, who happened to be at the meeting, got up and said it could not be done, not while she and her family were members. She stirred up opposition among her relatives and parents' friends on whose opinions she could rely and got a counter-revolution under way. In the end nothing happened and the whole excitement petered out. The old people didn't want to change their ways and ideas, and the young ones weren't interested. Only a few held out a little longer, among them Gertrude's boss, who cut her salary from \$14 to \$8 a week and said she was a Communist. . . .

And Sonya?

Blond and blue-eyed, with fair skin and high cheek-bones, she comes from Russian peasant stock. Her family emigrated under the Czar. She was born here, but her parents died when she was four. Brought up by foster-parents of different stock, she knew nothing of her background, her own people, the rich store of Russian art, music, and literature, or the deep spiritual nostalgia in the Russian peasant soul. She knew so little about it she asked me whether all Russians were Jews. "Russians are Slavs," I said. "Some may be Jewish, German, Mongolian, or other stock. Primarily they are Slavs."

She said nothing further. Instead she walked to the radio which was playing Tchaikovsky and turned up the volume. "He's my favorite," she said.

I asked her why. She couldn't tell. But sometimes, she said, she went to the Russian films because she liked the faces of the people.

## II

Years ago, a few far-seeing women in the Y.W.C.A. realized the need and desire of the newcomer in America to be admitted into the larger community life, and started a small Center for immigrant women at the Battery. But their activities soon assumed a much wider scope with larger quarters needed, until finally the Center occupied its present attractive seven-story building at 341 East 17th Street. Its early information and naturalization service was retained, but the general program was revised. Since the Center believes that old and new-world prejudices are broken down in the sharing of mutual problems, in the process of thinking together, and in the fellowship of social activity, individuals and groups—second- and third-generation Americans as well as newcomers—have been encouraged to participate in its program. There are 20 members of the staff, representing nine nationalities. Mrs. Marie Chase Cole has been executive secretary since 1931.

Numerous nationality groups now affiliated with it meet on the lower floors of the building. Norwegians may organize a bazaar for Norwegian Relief; Albanian and Italian mothers talk over parent and school problems. The Aura Club of second-generation Italian youth, though also fond of dances and games, have their lectures and discussion nights. The Chinese stage plays; Ukrainians gather for folk-singing and dancing; Polish, Armenian, Filipino, and Czech groups work out programs.

No club remains permanently isolated from the rest. A Common Council, to which each group delegates two members, meets monthly for discussion of inter-

cultural problems. Clannish partiality is banned, and racial or national impetuosity—where it exists—is channeled by strict enforcement of parliamentary law.

The Council's main concern is to get the groups to know each other and intermingle freely. It is not too difficult to accomplish. The Christmas bazaar puts the Ukrainian chorus and the Polish group on the same program. The folk-dance enthusiasts gather members from every club and plan international pageants. The Dramatic Workshop draws capable actors and stagehands from both new and old-world groups; and the festivals of the seasons always pull the clubs together. No one who saw them forgot the happy and grateful faces of the refugees who came to share the Center's Thanksgiving turkey.

Once the groups know each other, anything is apt to happen—from the exchange of cooking recipes to intermarriage between the most hostile clans. A Ukrainian mother whose daughter married a boy of Italian descent told me she had been much opposed to the marriage, "but the kids knew better. They said they were Americans and nothing else, and they got themselves a license."

Occasionally a new group is born—sometimes of an emergency—as the high school and college club of second-generation Poles who used to scorn their parents' old-country tales and their stubborn love for things Polish. They would have none of it. Yet, when Poland went under and its history and culture seemed doomed, that easy contempt was gone. And the Center, seeing a group of American youths torn with confusion, opened its doors to them and helped organize their activities.

At their meetings they may hear a lecture on Polish literature or art and afterwards dance and have fruit-punch—nothing spectacular or out of the ordi-

nary. Yet being together eases the sorrow they feel since Poland fell; it gives them security and a new sense of gratitude toward America.

With the United States precipitated into war on December 7, the Center had to adjust to new situations.

Red Cross groups were formed; first-aid courses started; health and nutrition information disseminated. Yes, and the resident enemy aliens lost their short-wave radios and cameras, though the smiles of their fellow-residents remained reassuring as before. There was no discrimination toward any of the culture groups: Italian and German American meetings went on as scheduled. The very troubled refugees were encouraged to continue with their "Night in Vienna" show, and any inkling of hysteria was quickly quelled by friendly and sympathetic words.

Tables at the Center on Christmas morning were decorated with greens and colored bulbs and individual gifts. A huge fire crackled in the fireplace. Carols of many nations were sung.

Stefania, a 20-year-old Polish refugee, who hadn't heard from her family abroad for over a year, had her little brother's photograph beside her plate. Unwrapping the cellophane stocking filled with candy and surprises at her place, she said to her German-born neighbor, "Don't these silly things remind you of your childhood parties? I never thought they could mean so much. It's because of the kindness that's wrapped up with them that . . . that"—her eyes suddenly filled with tears—"that they touch you so."

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Felizia Seyd, resident-member of International Center, came to this country four years ago. A Swiss citizen but German-born, she is the author of *Romantic Rebel, a life of George Sand*.

## • News Notes •

With this issue *COMMON GROUND* is happy to announce a board of editorial advisers: its former editor, Louis Adamic, Van Wyck Brooks, Pearl Buck, Mary Ellen Chase, Langston Hughes, Alvin Johnson, Thomas Mann, and Lin Yutang.

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For the first time, the National Folk Festival, under the direction of Sarah Gertrude Knott, will be presented in New York City at Madison Square Garden, May 4, following its performance in Washington, April 29 to May 2. Early in its development, the Festival concentrated on folk expressions of the Indians and the early colonists, on the work songs of cowboys, lumberjacks, cotton-pickers, sailors, and miners, but has since expanded to include folk materials of the newer immigrant strains. Last year 26 states and Haiti were represented in the program, which has become a lively cross-section of American cultural origins.

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Reaffirming and underlining the American tradition of the rights of the individual, the United States Supreme Court recently invalidated the California "Okie" law. Said Justice Robert H. Jackson in one opinion: "We should say now, and in no uncertain terms, that a man's mere property status, without more, cannot be used by a state to test, qualify, or limit his rights as a citizen of the United States. 'Indigence' in itself is neither a source of rights nor a basis for denying them. The mere state of being without funds is a neutral fact—constitutionally an irrelevance, like race, creed, or color."

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"If you can become acquainted with the Mexicans as human beings, that's your contribution to better relations between the nations," says Clarence Senior,

instructor at the University of Kansas City. To demonstrate his belief, he conducts a Work Camp, sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, for six or seven weeks in the summer at Torreon, Mexico. Here college students work side by side with Mexicans at the building of adobe school houses and other useful tasks, play baseball with them, and study at first-hand their sociological problems. The group has grown from 18 three years ago to 82 last year, and will probably reach 150 this summer. Campers come back thinking of the Mexican peasant as a human being, not a "greaser"; and the peasant thinks of Americans not as "gringos" but as men and women willing to work beside him—a definite contribution to hemispheric understanding.

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The Vassar College Social Museum presented in February an exhibit called "The Great Idea"—a graphic and pictorial illustration of the American principle of freedom for many races, nationalities, and religions. This was the first of a series on the general topic of individual rights in the American democracy. Two features of the exhibit which will be permanent keynotes of the series are a poster "balance sheet" of democracy, and a large mural showing a typical group of Americans against a background symbolizing the nation's diversified life in industry, agriculture, and religion.

Outgrowth of work in Kenneth W. Porter's course in Cultural History of the United States (described in the Winter 1941 issue of *COMMON GROUND*) was a series of maps, each tracing the family history of a student as regards national origin, geographical movement, occupation, and religion.

Various displays stressed the contributions which many peoples have made to

## NEWS NOTES

American culture; and others presented the problems of groups who face the greatest difficulties in achieving freedom in America—the Orientals, Negroes, migrant workers, and refugees.

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“The church that friendship built”—the Elmwood Methodist Church in Philadelphia, was formally opened on January 18. The four walls of this \$25,000 structure, erected at a cost of only \$750, are dedicated to the Negroes, Chinese, Catholics, and Episcopalians who worked side by side for 19 months in the building of it, and the tower is dedicated to the Jewish American who supplied the money.

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The Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, recently held an exhibition of the work of European artists now teaching in America, to suggest that here “is an important influence on the younger generation of artists in this country which cannot be disregarded if one is to make a balanced judgment on our cultural destiny.” Among the artists exhibiting were Josef Albers, George Grosz, Kurt Seligman, Zoltan Sepeshy, and Karl Zerbe.

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“Let Freedom Sing” is a weekly series of radio “morale” programs presented by the workers of Bridgeport, Connecticut, over Station wicc in co-operation with the Sunday Herald, from 3 to 3:30 Sunday afternoons. Long the industrial capital of the state, Bridgeport, with its large new-immigrant population, is more than ever important in manning the “arsenal of democracy.” The programs feature local manufacturing concerns whose products are essential to defense, draw their performers from the workers, and seek to arouse in them a sense of pride and participation in the country’s war effort.

Under the direction of the Board of Education, the city of Springfield, Massachusetts—population 150,000, with a fairly large percentage of persons of French Canadian, Italian, Irish, Polish, Russian, and Greek origin—has for two years been engaged in a successful experiment to eliminate racial prejudice among children and adults, and to foster democracy and good citizenship.

Instructional materials and practices at every educational level in the schools were aimed at acquainting pupils with the ideals and traditions of America and to point ways whereby people could live harmoniously together, regardless of differences of racial backgrounds. Since the program encompassed the whole community, the Board of Education also organized a system of adult education forums on controversial subjects, with audience participation, which drew an average attendance of 1,000 persons.

Realizing that teachers, too, might have prejudices not in harmony with a truly American community, the Board last fall introduced a series of seminars for the teaching staff, to stress the importance of racial and religious understanding. And in a concrete attempt to put their beliefs into practice, officials went directly to employers to persuade them to cease discrimination where it was found to exist—and were in many cases successful.

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Swimming pools in two California cities have been opened to Mexicans and Negroes as a result of recent Court decisions. In Pomona, Superior Court Judge Walter S. Gates directed the city to permit use of bath and swimming pool facilities to Mexicans on an equality with all other people; and in Pasadena, the U.S. District Court of Appeals held the city had no right to bar anyone on account of race or color from a tax-supported pool.

## • From the Immigrant Press •

### UNITED WE STAND

*Aufbau* (German), New York City, December 12:

The hour of historic importance has struck for America. In the struggle over which shall prevail in this world—right or wrong, freedom or tyranny—the United States of America has taken her stand. Confident in the justice of its cause, a united and determined nation has answered the treacherous assault of the Japanese Empire by a call to arms.

At this moment, the immigrants who in recent years have found asylum and a new homeland under the Star Spangled Banner put forth but one desire and pledge: to stand side by side with the American people, to help them to the best of their abilities in the defense of our country and its ideals. These immigrants, coming from many countries and speaking many languages, are one in their faith in democracy, their hatred of any kind of dictatorship, and their love for the nation that gave them a home.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and in every corner where the American and Pan-American idea has taken shape and been imbued with content, these immigrants stand with the President and the American people with all that is theirs materially and spiritually.

Their hearts and minds are possessed by but a single idea: Come what may—we stand united for the defense of America!

*New Yorker Staats-Zeitung und Herold* (German), New York City, December 12:

Ever since Adolph Hitler took over Germany in 1933 and proceeded to fasten himself on Europe, it was inevitable that

we would either have to accept him or go to war. Today America accepts his challenge. We will fight until this danger to our way of life is eliminated.

For our readers and for the German American element, there is no doubt as to where their course lies. It lies in this country of which they are a part, to which they have contributed so much, and to which they have given full allegiance at all times.

So we face the struggle ahead of us with strong hearts and the knowledge that our America is worth fighting for; worth dying for.

America today fights three enemies—Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese. Their leadership, their ideology, and their methods are similar. They seek to conquer. They will fail.

*Neue Volkszeitung* (German), New York City, December 12:

We do not doubt at all that a majority of the German people will condemn Hitler's declaration of war on the United States as much as they have, silently, condemned his previous crimes. We regard Germany just as much a conquered country overrun by force as Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and all other victims of the Nazi barbarians.

*Dobo* (Japanese), Los Angeles, December 9:

Nothing could be more shameful, cowardly, unwarranted, and unjustified than Japan's attack on the United States.

We must now fight for the complete defeat of militaristic Japan. To join in the defense of America, to fight against Japan now, is to fight not only for the defeat



## FROM THE IMMIGRANT PRESS

of the dictator clique of Japan but also for the complete defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

*Il Progresso (Italian), New York City, December 12:*

There is only one reality which predominates: we are at war, and a simple, supreme duty guides us—loyalty to America and its government. The American people of Italian origin who are loyal to the United States need have no fear because the government will protect them in their right to liberty and justice.

Every human sentiment in our hearts for the land which gave us birth cannot distract us from our precise and intelligent duty, which is to confirm without the slightest shadow of mental restriction our full loyalty, the fruit of our appreciation and affection for the America of which we are proud citizens, where we have been able to carry on our careers and create our families, where we gave birth to our children who are today as always ready to serve their country.

*L'Unita del Popolo (Italian), New York City, December 12:*

The Italian people when fighting in the trenches of democracy for a just and noble cause know how to fight heroically and bravely as true sons of the greater fighter for freedom, Giuseppe Garibaldi.

*Az Ember (Hungarian), New York City, December 13:*

All of us, native and foreign-born Americans, not only offer but demand our share in the struggle ahead of us in the heroic defense of our land. In firm conviction do we assure American public opinion that Americans of Hungarian birth are as loyal to this land as the native sons of America.

*Dziennik Zwiazkowy (Polish), Chicago, December 8:*

Now the duty of all Americans of Polish descent and of all Poles residing in the United States is to make every effort to bring victory to the United States, to defeat the enemy who wants to deprive us and the future generations of all our achievements.

*Dziennik Polski (Polish), Detroit, December 9:*

We are not any more the arsenal of democracy but the most important and most responsible outpost on the most important battlefield of the war. Even if we have to make the greatest sacrifices, we will fulfill our duty. This shall be our solemn promise in the name of Liberty!

*Nordstjerman (Swedish), New York City, December 12:*

Japan's deceitful blitz blow has welded the American people together as nothing else could have done. Americans have at last found themselves.

America has paid a high price for peace and lost, but it need not be ashamed of having tried. We all knew that the war would drag us in sooner or later. Now it is done, and the way it happened will be found to have been the best. We have no choice now. About the final outcome there is no doubt, despite Uncle Sam's slow awkward start and the gullibility which has caused defeat in the first round. But the battle has just begun and Japan will see that he who reaches for the sword will be killed by the sword. "Japan has started it; we shall finish it" should be our motto. It coincides with Great Britain's in the great battle with Hitler. With grim determination and growing wrath, America confronts its attackers.

## • The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

### ABREAST OF OUR TIME

*THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION IN AMERICA.* By T. V. Smith. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 153 pp. \$1.50

T. V. Smith is a clear-headed man of affairs as well as a thinker. In the legislature of his state, as a member of Congress, as originator of the University of Chicago Round Table and other civic activities, he has learned how to understand, and interpret for, the American mind. There is ample evidence of this in his compact and clear presentation of our democratic "middle way." This the author defines as founded on a love of democracy which is itself a "preoccupation with growing" and makes our tradition. With this in mind, the strange and often incongruous events, moods, and changes in our political history fall into perspective.

The idea of growth as it is clarified by Mr. Smith has involved the break-up of any system that threatened to enthrone political power or social and economic privilege, and dominated the mind of the people. Its best leaders have been those in whom this idea was a guiding principle, and, as the author suggests in two chapters, perhaps most dynamically expressed in Abraham Lincoln and Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Today's leaders face a dilemma in which any choice seems especially to involve growth and change. The systems now competing for world favor are two: the one defining the essential as what is common among men, the other as what is different. The first tends toward soli-

darity and mechanical order, and it is the pressing need for solidarity and order at a time of crises and supreme danger that spreads confusion in the minds of many Americans today. Yet, despite this promise of easy security, Mr. Smith's analysis and affirmation show that it is toward the second of these choices that our tradition—"the fruitful acceptance of continuous change"—will inevitably bear us, for with it come freedom and variety.

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In *The Brandeis Guide to the Modern World*, edited by Alfred Lief (Little, Brown, \$2.75), we have Justice Brandeis as his own spoken and written words portray him. This collection of wise comments on many themes—none a matter of indifference to any citizen—has an appeal similar to those of Justice Holmes'. These observations from Brandeis are even closer to the texture of our everyday thoughts. As Mr. Lief says in his admirable Preface: "the words of Brandeis are conclusions from experience . . . he does not expound a doctrine." True; but we shall find them a stimulant to thinking and a guide to action at a time when no rift between thought and action can be allowed.

Irwin Edman, in *Fountainheads of Freedom* (Reynal & Hitchcock, \$3.75), finds assurance for the tradition of freedom and for the validity of the democratic ideal in its survival through two thousand years of struggle. With the collaboration of Professor Herbert W. Schneider, he has brought together here

documents on the subject of human liberties from the ancient world to the present time. Mr. Edman's own lengthy commentary is inspiring, far-seeing and wise. Here in this book is a chance for the man at home to share the pleasures of the man on the campus and, by re-vitalizing truths that could not die though assailed through twenty centuries, keep himself abreast of the world today.

From quite another slant, Van Wyck Brooks, in *Opinions of Oliver Allston* (Dutton. \$2.50), looks at a world in which the arena of conflicting ideas has been the printed book. While his own summed observations are classed as literary criticism, many a reader will find expressed here judgments of value that are social and moral quite as truly as they are literary—and find them stated with uncompromising frankness and force.

S. I. Hayakawa's *Language in Action* (Harcourt, Brace. \$2), a popular interpretation of semantics, shows us how common are distortions in the medium by which ideas are conveyed. Words being the medium, it is clear that when these verbal signs assume a validity in and for themselves, they displace the reality they were meant to communicate. Indeed, our judgments are often arrested by words used as barriers to thought; our very ideas deformed in the making. It

becomes useless for wise men to warn against impending evils, Mr. Hayakawa shows, if the truths they utter are—in the mind of mass majorities—broken down by a barrage of misleading or emotionally compulsive words. The measure of our strength as a democracy is likely to be the degree of intelligence with which our people weigh what is said to them and distinguish the true from the false. An American educator, Canadian-born, Mr. Hayakawa has a real talent for the task he has undertaken and he performs it with skill and humor.

Most comprehensive of current books on intercultural relations is *When People Meet*, edited by Alain Locke and Bernhard J. Stern (Progressive Education Association. \$3), to which 77 writers contribute, each with a special approach. They treat of many races and cultures blending in a world menaced by racism, a pseudo-scientific doctrine that hides its real objectives behind plausible myths. A worthwhile investment in liberal culture.

Melville J. Herskovits (now in Brazil for further studies of similar nature) gives the results of twenty years of research in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Harpers. \$4). Mr. Herskovits contends that a main support of race prejudice here is the myth that the Negro has no past or that it is unworthy. An exhaustive study.

## AMERICAN CHARACTER

Among the impressive life-narratives recently published, *Simón Bolívar*, by Elizabeth Waugh (Macmillan. \$2.50), is a fascinating story. The peer of Washington as a statesman, with a personality as heroic as the Cid, Bolívar cherished a dream that we hardly yet dare hope can be fulfilled—that of a United America, the "Queen of Republics."

The Venezuelan capital, birthplace of the Liberator, is also the scene of a lively account of life there a hundred years later in *Young Man of Caracas*, by T. R. Ybarra (Ives Washburn. \$3). This is as much the story of a spirited Boston girl, Nellie Russell, who became the wife of a very youthful General Alejandro Ybarra (and hence the author's mother)—of

their family, their people, and things social and political—as it is the story of the writer. A first-rate volume.

In *Native American* (Scribner's. \$3), Ray Stannard Baker gives us a revealing portrait of his father, the family hero and a leading citizen on the northern Middle Border. It sketches also the genesis and development of the mythical "David Grayson," whose books have been more widely known than those of the author writing under his own name. Good Americana.

Krishnalal Shridharani, author of *My India, My America* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$3.75), injects a strong vein of philosophy, or rather of reflective interpretation, into his absorbing and colorful story. Here is a stimulating portrait of India and India's youth facing destiny and the impact of a Western world.

Roumania gave us Konrad Bercovici, whose life story (to date) is told in *It's the Gypsy in Me* (Prentice Hall. \$2.75). Exiled as a youth, a transient in Paris, he rooted himself in the United States and has fought for social justice ever since—with brain and pen always, but often too with his fists. His life has been a saga of bizarre adventure. Entirely fearless, recklessly impulsive, he exposes corruption in a government or in a private individual, regardless of consequence to himself. His creed for new Americans is

that they should give the country of their adoption more than they receive.

*The Life of Margaret Fuller*, by Madeleine B. Stern (Dutton. \$3.75), is a leisurely, intimate narrative of the one woman who could shine with equal luster in the galaxy of New England's greatest men. Altogether a satisfying as well as an admirable, scholarly piece of work.

The work of the Mayo brothers and their father is a social achievement, and hence their life story in *The Doctors Mayo*, by H. B. Clapesattle (University of Minnesota Press. \$3.75), may be regarded in that light as well as biography. They were, however, highly individualized in person and talents, and this account does full justice to the character and contribution of each.

*They Knew Lincoln*, by J. E. Washington (Dutton. \$3.75), is a folk-portrait of Lincoln as pictured in the minds of the Negroes of his time and preserved in humbler quarters even today. Mr. Washington's composite of such memory and legend supplies also a vivid light on the narrators themselves. A fine companion volume to this is *Lincoln: His Life in Photographs* (New York: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce. \$3), by Stefan Lorant. It includes not only several newly-discovered photographs of the President, but also pictures of his homes, friends, generals, and cabinet officers.

## NEW AMERICANS AND OLD

*Windswept*, by Mary Ellen Chase (Macmillan. \$2.50), is top-ranking fiction from any angle, but notable here for the reason that in this, her deepest and wisest novel, she has brought into close relation and true harmony a Czech immigrant and an old-stock American family, interweaving the pattern of their lives through a

generation. The Czech becomes in her story a carrier of the finest in Old-World character, inner culture, and understanding of life. A humble man of peasant origin, Jan Pisek brings to the Marston family something they value and love, that blends easily with their traditions, their culture, their philosophy of life.

## THE BOOKSHELF

In one way he surpasses them, in that he makes "a companion of Time, rather than a master." *Windswept* takes deep hold on the roots of things, in old lands as well as in the new.

*L. Baxter, Medicus*, by Knud Stouman (Greystone. \$2.75), gives a vivid picture of New York in the late 17th century and of the Holland of that period to which aspirants for high rank in the medical profession would naturally return for advanced study. Well-written, the novel hinges on the binding grip of property and tradition on the younger folk, who in their struggle to break these bonds show the same independence and sense of destiny we claim as the American spirit today.

Giuseppe Di Gioia's *Swift Are the Shadows* (Pyramid Press. \$2.50) is woven out of material from the author's youth

in an Italian village, his struggle upward and plight under fascist rule, his subsequent exile and arrival in the States. A fine picture of the true folk of Italy and their transplanted American children.

*Broad and Alien Is the World*, by Ciro Alegría (Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.75), winner of the Latin American Prize Novel Contest, is the story of a village community in Peru. We look at its life through the mind of the kindly and patriarchal mayor, Rosendo Maqui. Here is the faith of simple man in the corn, the wheat, and the earth that yields them: a creed of brotherly love that grows with the fruits of labor—undone by the predatory design of a rich land-holder. "The Indian is a Christ, nailed to the cross of injustice," but the author offers no solution to the problem posed.

## IN THE NATIONAL VEIN

*Short Grass Country* by Stanley Vestal, and *Ozark Country* by Otto Rayburn are two more of the American Folkways Series (Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$3 each), fully up to the standard set in the previous volumes. In the Short Grass region, history has been telescoped so that men alive today have seen every phase of American advance—from stone-age Comanche to oil derrick and adding machine. Space is the key to their psychology. But in the Ozarks the time-clock stopped for a hundred years; and there, at the turn of the century, were folkways dating from the Louisiana purchase in 1803. These are now vanishing, but the record is preserved by one who knows the hill folk and their old-time charm.

For *Some American Primitives* (Houghton Mifflin. \$3), Clara E. Sears has col-

lected the work of itinerant painters of portraits of the century preceding the advent of photography. These reveal not only a notable vigor and freshness of nameless artists, but also give intimate glimpses of early American character. The work includes 110 illustrations of this folk art.

Also emerging authentically from the national vein, *Our Singing Country* (Macmillan. \$5) by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, with Ruth Crawford Seeger as Music Editor, is a superb collection of songs in the American idiom that have been worn smooth through long usage by all the kinds of people that go into the makeup of America. Especially recommended.

*America's Own Refugees*, by Henry H. Collins, Jr. (Princeton University Press.



## COMMON GROUND

\$3), deals with a problem created by former wastage—our migrant population. He finds this element possessed of sturdy character, and, moving by families, bearing much resemblance to those earlier pioneers whom we honor as builders of the nation. An important study with real impact.

Of immediate and urgent appeal is Richard Wright's *12 Million Black Voices* (Viking Press. \$3) with photo-direction by Edwin Rosskam. Here 90 superb photographs tell a moving story, while the text is an impassioned yet temperate and loyal appeal to Americans to vindicate the claims made by our Constitution, our tradition, our avowed faith, for all members of our citizenry, whatever their racial origin, color, or condition. Under the pronouns we, our, and us, Mr. Wright has given us an inspired document that asks for the Negro "the right to share in the upward march of American life, the

only life we remember or have known."

We get other glimpses of the American scene in *Independent Vermont*, by Charles Miner Thompson (Houghton Mifflin. \$4.50). This record shows what a self-reliant people have done under every sort of handicap over a period of 150 years, and gives us a "microcosm of the American way of democracy at its best." *Boston's Immigrants*, by Oscar Handlin (Harvard University Press. \$3.25), is an historical study of adjustment, distribution, and group relations of the stream of new arrivals in Boston between 1790 and 1865. It deals with the character, qualities, occupational levels, and group consciousness of those who elected to stay. *A Maritime History of New York*, compiled by a WPA Writers' Project (Doubleday, Doran. \$3), while basically a work of research, turns out to be fascinating reading with a wealth of incidents that formal histories fail to record.

## FROM THE OLD WORLD

Nothing could be more timely than the book *Great Men and Women of Poland*, which comes to us edited by Stephen P. Mizwa (Macmillan. \$4). Here are the lives of many Poles whose names are household words, others who may be new to some of us, but all of intense interest and luminous with the spirit of liberty that burned in these sons and daughters of Poland.

Similarly we welcome a record from Czechoslovakia of those who have best expressed the spirit of that people in writings preserved during a thousand years of history. *We Were and We Shall Be*, arranged by Zdenka and Jan Munzer (Frederich Ungar. \$2.50), restores with startling clarity the utterances of such

heroes and spiritual leaders as Jan Huss, not only the greatest figure in the Czech reformation but a supreme type among the world's reformers and martyrs; and of Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky), known as "Teacher of Nations," whose wise words, if the nations had remembered and heeded them, would have spared them frightful penalties.

Another heroic story of the Old World is John Clinton Adams' *Flight in Winter* (Princeton University Press. \$3), a stirring dramatization of the Serbian Retreat of 1915. This account of an incredible army which stormed back from defeat to ultimate victory is one that may well hearten the defenders of liberty today in all lands.

## RECOMMENDED READING—List III

With this list, the third in its series of Recommended Reading, COMMON GROUND brings together books for 8- to 14-year-olds, aimed at understanding of the various cultural strains within the population of the United States.

For assistance in the compilation we are indebted to Beatrice de Lima Meyers of the Children's Book Shop in Rochester, New York; Frances Clarke Sayers of the New York Public Library; Alison B. Alesios, author of children's books and branch librarian in New York City; and Charlemagne Rollins of the Chicago Public Library, compiler of the new 48-page pamphlet, "We Build Together," an excellent, annotated guide to books on the Negro, for elementary and high school use, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, 211 West 68th Street, Chicago, at 25 cents.

Single copies of any of COMMON GROUND's Recommended Reading lists are available free upon request; in quantity, at a nominal charge.

### YOUNG AMERICANS

*Young Americans from Many Lands.* Anne M. Peck and Enid Johnson. Chicago: Whitman. \$2

*On to Oregon! The Story of a Boy Pioneer.* Honoré Morrow. New York: Morrow. \$1.75

*Blue Willow.* Doris Gates. New York: Viking. \$2

*Cabin on Kettle Creek.* May Justus. Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$2

*The Moffats.* Eleanor Estes. New York: Harcourt, Brace. \$2

*Roller Skates.* Ruth Sawyer. New York: Viking. \$2

*We All Go to School.* Lavinia R. Davis. New York: Scribner's. \$1.50

*The World in a Barn.* Gertrude C. Warner. New York: Friendship Press. \$1

*Young Patriots.* Marjorie Hayes. Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$2

*The Jumping-Off Place.* Marian H. McNeely. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2

*Prairie Anchorage.* Marjorie Medary. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2

### AMERICAN INDIAN

*Dancing Cloud: The Navajo Boy.* Conrad and Mary Buff. New York: Viking. \$2

*Moccasins on the Trail.* Wolfe Thompson. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2

*A Son of the First People.* Adelaide Arnold. New York: Macmillan. \$2

*Waterless Mountain.* Laura A. Armer. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2.50

*Whispering Girl.* F. C. Means. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$2

*Dark Circle of Branches.* Laura A. Armer. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2.50

*Farthest West.* Laura A. Armer. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2.50

### DUTCH AMERICAN

*Cristina of Old New York.* Gertrude Crownfield. Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$2

*Down Ryton River.* E. R. Gaggin. New York: Viking. \$2

### ENGLISH AMERICAN

*Timothy Taylor, Ambassador of Good Will.* Helen M. Husted. New York: Coward-McCann.

### GERMAN AMERICAN

*Little Pilgrim to Penn's Woods.* Edna Albert. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2

### ITALIAN AMERICAN

*Carlotta.* Ella N. Seyfert. New York: Crowell. \$2

*Golden Gate.* Valenti Angelo. New York: Viking. \$2

## COMMON GROUND

*Hector.* Edward Ernest. New York: Longmans, Green. \$1.50

### JAPANESE AMERICAN

*Rainbow Bridge.* Florence C. Means. New York: Friendship Press. \$1.50

### JEWISH AMERICAN

*Children of the Promise.* Florence C. Means. New York: Friendship Press. \$1

### MEXICAN AMERICAN

*A New Mexican Boy.* Helen L. Marshall. New York: Holiday House. \$2

*Paradise Valley.* Valenti Angelo. New York: Viking. \$2

*The Trader's Children.* Laura A. Armer. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2.50

*Wooden Saddles: The Adventures of a Mexican Boy in His Own Land.* Marion Lay. New York: Morrow. \$2

*Chuck Martinez.* Priscilla Holton. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2

### NEGRO AMERICAN

*The Child's Story of the Negro.* Jane D. Shackelford. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers. \$1.25

*Black Fire: A Story of Henri Christophe.* Covelle Newcomb. New York: Longmans, Green. \$2.50

*Golden Slippers: An Anthology of Negro Poetry for Young Readers.* Arna Bontemps. New York: Harpers. \$2.50

*Great Tradition.* Marjorie H. Allee. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$2

*Negro Builders and Heroes.* Benjamin G. Brawley. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. \$2.50

*Negro Folk Tales.* Helen A. Whiting. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers. \$1

*Negro Makers of History.* Carter G. Woodson. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers. \$1.50

*Key Corner.* Eva Knox Evans. New York: Putnam. \$2

*Black Thunder.* Arna Bontemps. New York: Macmillan. \$2.50

*Up From Slavery.* Booker T. Washington. New York: Sun Dial. \$1

*Negro Art, Music and Rhyme.* Helen A. Whiting. Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers. \$1

*Sad-Faced Boy.* Arna Bontemps. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$2

*Shuttered Windows.* F. C. Means. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$2

*Paul Robeson.* Eslanda Robeson. New York: Harpers. \$2.50

*Railroad to Freedom.* Hildegard Swift. New York: Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50

*Twelve American Negroes.* Mary Jennings. New York: Friendship Press. \$1

*We Sing America.* Marion Cuthbert. New York: Friendship Press. \$1

*Zeke.* Mary W. Ovington. New York: Harcourt, Brace. \$2

### RUSSIAN AMERICAN

*A Boy Named John.* John Cournos. New York: Scribner's. \$1.50

*About Bellamy.* Elizabeth B. De Trevine. New York: Harpers. \$2

### SWEDISH AMERICAN

*Elin's Amerika.* Marguerite De Angeli. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

## CHILDREN OF OTHER COUNTRIES

### AFRICA

*Pepperfoot of Thursday Market.* Robert Davis. New York: Holiday House. \$2

*Boomba Lives in Africa.* Caroline Singer and Cyrus Le Roy Baldrige. New York: Holiday House. \$1.75

### ALBANIA

*Pran of Albania.* Elizabeth C. Miller. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

### AUSTRIA

*Marta Finds the Golden Door.* Frances Cavanah. New York: Grosset, Dunlap. 50c

## RECOMMENDED READING

### BELGIUM

*The Golden Basket.* Ludwig Bemelmans. New York: Viking Press. \$2

### BULGARIA

*Dobry.* Monica Shannon. New York: Viking. \$2

*Son of the Danube.* B. G. Petroff. New York: Viking. \$2

### CHINA

*Mei Li.* Thomas Handforth. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

*Pigtails.* Johanna Hekking. New York: Stokes. \$2

*Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze.* Elizabeth Lewis. Philadelphia: Winston. \$2.50

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*Happy Times in Czechoslovakia.* Libushka Bartusek. New York: Knopf. \$2

*House of Many Tongues.* Fjeril Hess. New York: Macmillan. \$2

*Maminka's Children.* Elizabeth O. Jones. New York: Macmillan. \$2

*Nanka of Old Bohemia.* Helene Pelzel. Chicago: Whitman. \$2

### DENMARK

*Sticks Across the Chimney.* Nora Burgon. New York: Holiday House. \$2

### ENGLAND

*We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea.* Arthur Ransome. New York: Macmillan. \$2

*The Bastable Children.* Edith Nesbit. New York: Coward-McCann. \$3

*Smoky House.* Elizabeth Goudge. New York: Coward-McCann. \$2

### FINLAND

*Finlandia: The Story of Sibelius.* Elliott Arnold. New York: Holt. \$2.50

*Happy Times in Finland.* Libushka Bartusek. New York: Knopf. \$2

*Heroes of the Kalevala.* Babette Deutsch. New York: Messner. \$2.50

### FRANCE

*Blue Nets and Red Sails.* Helen B. Preston. New York: Longmans, Green. \$1

*Fortune's Caravan.* Lily Jean-Javal. New York: Morrow. \$1.75

*Painted Saints.* Lucy Embury. New York: Viking. \$2

*The Ragman of Paris.* Elizabeth O. Jones. New York: Oxford. \$1.50

### GERMANY

*Emil and the Detective.* Erich Kästner. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

*Hansel the Gander.* Katherine Kuebler. New York: Morrow. \$1.50

*Martin the Goose Boy.* Marie Barringer. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$1.75

*Sperli the Clockmaker.* Daisy Neumann. New York: Macmillan. \$2

### GREECE

*Buffo and Petro.* Alison B. Alessios. New York: Longmans, Green. \$1.50

*Evenings in a Greek Bazaar.* Agnes C. Vaughan. New York: Knopf. \$2

*The Spear of Ulysses.* Alison B. Alessios. New York: Longmans, Green. \$1.75

### HOLLAND

*The Bells of Amsterdam.* Ruth Holberg. New York: Crowell. \$2

*The Golden Cat Head.* Marian King. Chicago: Whitman. \$1.50

*Kersti and St. Nicholas.* Hilda van Stockum. New York: Viking. \$2

*Dirk's Dog.* Bello. Meindert DeJong. New York: Harpers. \$2

*Dina and Betsy.* Adele De Leeuw. New York: Macmillan. \$1

### HUNGARY

*The Good Master.* Kate Seredy. New York: Viking. \$2

*My Brothers and I.* Alexander Finta. New York: Holiday House. \$2

*The White Stag.* Kate Seredy. New York: Viking. \$2

*The Eagle's Quest.* Charlotte Lederer. New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

### IRELAND

*Pegeen.* Hilda van Stockum. New York: Viking Press. \$2

## COMMON GROUND

*The Unicorn With the Silver Shoes.*  
Robert Lawson. New York: Longmans,  
Green. \$2

*Where the Wind Never Blew.* Padraic  
Colum. New York: Macmillan. \$1.50

### ITALY

*Adventures of Chicchi.* Paolo Lom-  
broso. New York: Putnam. \$2.50

*Chico, the Homing Pigeon.* L. M. Blan-  
chard. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$1.75

*Carmela Commands.* Walter S. Ball.  
New York: Harpers. \$2

*Concetta the Coral Girl.* Virginia Ol-  
cott. New York: Stokes. \$1.75

*Handsome Donkey.* M. G. Davis. New  
York: Harcourt, Brace. \$1.75

*Macaroni.* Myna Lockwood. New  
York: Oxford. \$1

*Nino.* Valenti Angelo. New York: Vik-  
ing. \$2

### JAPAN

*The Cat Who Went to Heaven.* Eliza-  
beth Coatsworth. New York: Macmillan.  
\$2

*Great Sweeping Day.* Esther Wood.  
New York: Longmans, Green. \$1.50

*Swords and Iris.* Lilian H. Strack. New  
York: Harpers. \$1.80

### NORWAY

*Norwegian Farm.* Marie Hamsun.  
Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$2

*Ola.* Ingri and Edgar d'Aulaire. New  
York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

*Sidsel Longskirt and Solve Suntrap.* [In  
one volume] Hans Aanrud. Philadelphia:  
Winston. \$2

### POLAND

*Trumpeter of Krakow.* Eric Kelly. New  
York: Macmillan. \$2.50

*The Blacksmith of Vilno.* Eric Kelly.  
New York: Macmillan. \$2.50

### PORTUGAL

*Manoel.* Claire N. Atwater. New York:  
Longmans, Green. \$2

*Three Secrets.* M. Josephine Smith  
New York: Macmillan. \$2

### ROUMANIA

*Young Trajan.* Elizabeth C. Miller  
New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

### RUSSIA

*All Things New.* Sonia Daugherty. New  
York: Nelson. \$1.75

*Masha: A Little Russian Girl.* Soni  
Mazer. New York: Doubleday, Doran  
\$1.75

*Red Sky.* T. A. Harper. New York: Vik-  
ing. \$2

### SPAIN

*Juan: Son of the Fisherman.* Isabel de  
Palencia. New York: Longmans, Green  
\$1.75

*Tofio Antonio.* Ruth Sawyer. New  
York: Viking. \$1.75

### SWEDEN

*Building a House in Sweden.* Marjorie  
Cautley. New York: Macmillan. \$1.75

*Children of the Soil.* Nora Burglon  
New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2

*Give Me a River.* Elizabeth Palmer  
New York: Scribner's. \$1.75

*Ingrid's Holidays.* Signe Lindegren  
New York: Macmillan. \$2

*Wonderful Adventures of Nils.* Selma  
Lagerlöf. New York: Doubleday, Doran  
\$2.50

### SWITZERLAND

*An Ear for Uncle Emil.* E. R. Gaggin  
New York: Viking. \$2

*Kobi.* Mary and Conrad Buff. New  
York: Viking. \$2

*The Three Sneezes and other Swis-  
Tales.* Roger Duvoisin. New York: Knopf  
\$2

### TURKEY

*Turgut Lives in Turkey.* Nezahet N  
Ege. New York: Longmans, Green. \$1.75